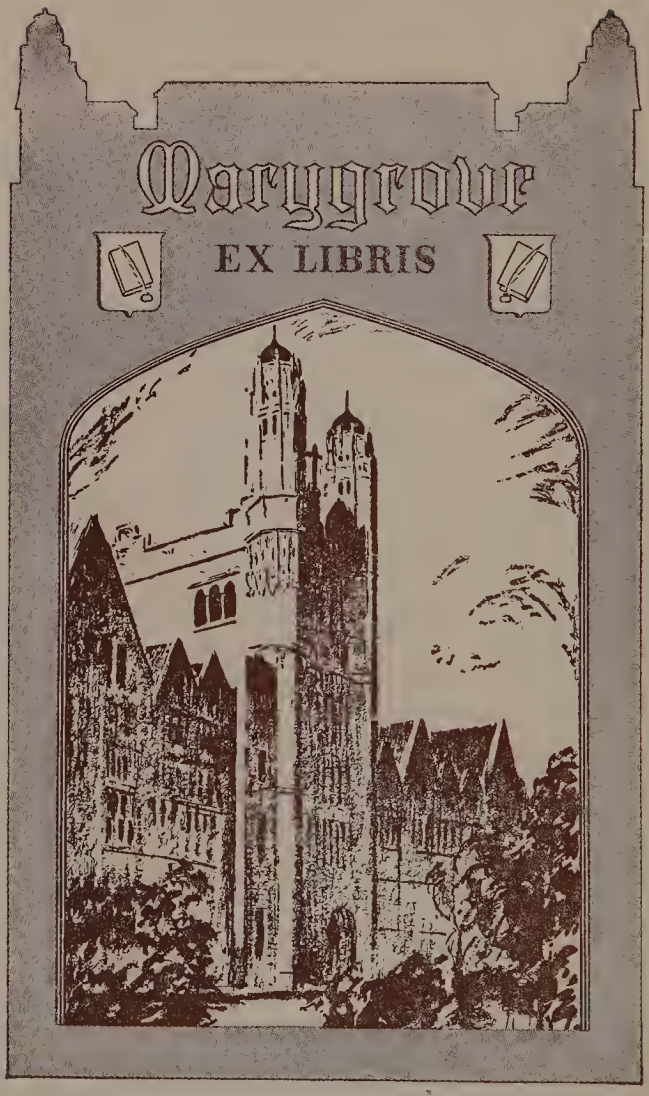
MANHATTAN TOE

1831

THE MAINE LAND
Hudsons River
A DESCRIPTION OF THE TOWNE OF MANNADOS OR NEW AMSTERDAM
LONGE ISLELAND
This Scale of Five Hundred yeardes is for the Towne

THE DUKE'S PLAN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MONEY TOWN

CASTLE GARDEN, 1852

From the music sheet, "Castle Garden Schottisch" by Wm. Dressler.
Lithographer, J. W. Lewis.

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CASTLE GARDEN
CASTLE GARDEN
BATH
BATH

MONEY TOWN

The Story of Manhattan Toe: that Golden Mile which lies between the Battery and the Fields

By FREDERICK L. COLLINS

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS

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For BARBARA:

HER BOOK

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MONEY TOWN

1

IF ANYBODY KNOWS FOR SURE HOW MANHATTAN ISLAND GOT ITS name, that somebody has never told. Consequently, the version of the christening recorded in these paragraphs, although as credible as any and more credible than most, must not be taken too seriously.

For one thing, it features in the godfather role a man named Hudson, and it is far from certain that this Hudson deserves any such distinction. It is even far from certain that he was the first white man to discover Manhattan Island and its great river and its great bay, since a pair of very stubborn fellows named Esteban and Giovanni dispute his claim, or did—Esteban Gomez and Giovanni da Verrazano.

It is hard to believe that we have so little exact knowledge about an event which occurred, historically speaking, so short a time ago. The paucity of our information would seem to throw a doubt on the accuracy of all history. If we cannot be sure about things that happened three hundred years ago, how can we tell with such apparent certainty what happened three or even four thousand years ago? Yet we know, or think we know, more about Adam and Eve or even Lilith than we know, or think we know, about Hudson and Verrazano and Gomez.

This impenetrable cloudiness settles over New York City like a Grand Bank fog. It imposes ignorance, invites fantasy. That is why there is less information and more misinformation about

the history of America's largest city than about any other important place in the so-called civilized world.

Although the schoolbooks are unanimous in giving credit for its discovery to Henry Hudson, both Verrazano and Gomez have their adherents, especially Verrazano. Gomez had been with Magellan and should have known his way around. Doubtless he did, so long as he stuck to rivers and straits, but in the rougher waters of public relations he was no match for his Italian rival. The combined Spanish and Portuguese electorate hardly adds up to a pressure group; so we hear less and less of Esteban as the centuries roll by. Italians, on the other hand, are always to be reckoned with in New York: for example, Arizona-born Fiorello La Guardia and California-born Joseph Paul DiMaggio, the two hardest-hitting citizens of Italian descent since Giuseppe Garibaldi turned in his uniform.

The Verrazano story, therefore, although denounced by Washington Irving and others as apocryphal, has its vociferous defenders, who will point out the exact spot, at the corner of Battery Place and Greenwich Street, where Giovanni da Verrazano—in 1524, thirty-two years before Gomez' "discovery," and eighty-five years before Hudson's—is said to have set foot on Manhattan Toe.

But history has settled on the man who may not have deserved the honor, but who did represent, in his ship and in his own person, the two peoples which were to rule the American metropolis for the greater part of two centuries.

Of only one thing about Henry Hudson's visit can we be sure: when he landed on Manhattan Island in 1609 he received no shower of torn-up telephone books from skyscraper windows. Broadway was to wait three centuries and one year over for the first exhibition of this typically Manhattanese way of extending hospitality to the arriving guests—until 1910, when another now almost legendary New York hero, Theodore Roosevelt, returned from the African jungle. There was, however, a reception committee of prominent citizens, complete with loin cloths, if we can believe our mural painters, waiting for Henry Hudson on "the emerald threshold of the metropolis of the Western World." And the welcome he received from these receptionists, if we can

Courtesy of the New-York Historical Society

NEW AMSTERDAM, *CIRCA* 1626

New York Public Library

PURCHASE OF MANHATTAN ISLAND

New York Public Library

BROAD STREET, 1659

believe our historians, was not soon to be forgotten by receivers or received.

He was apparently less eager than some of our more modern heroes to receive the plaudits of the populace, for he first cast anchor off what is now Coney Island and sent his men ashore there. When modest skipper Hudson did make up his mind to face the ceremonials which were being prepared for him, and steered his craft over the same course which many another visiting celebrity has since taken, he made an impression on his waiting hosts which not even a Channel swimmer or wrong-way flyer has since equaled or approached. They thought he was God.

They were quite wrong. Henry Hudson was a failure. Twice before, in 1607 and 1608, he had been unable to find that mythical northwest passage to the Pacific, and was even then making his annual grope for it between Brooklyn and Staten Island. Yet no loser in life's battle has been more thoroughly memorialized. Through failure he won fame, and gave his name to a great river, a great bay, a valley, a strait, a falls, three cities, two towns, one village, hundreds of highways, boulevards, avenues, and streets, thousands of automobiles and fur coats, the world's most famous trading company, and a school of American art.

The ship in which he was sailing up the bay was likewise no fit galleon for a god. The *Halve Maen* or *Half Moon* was what the Dutch called a *vlieboot,* flat-bottomed, two-masted, less than sixty feet long, and of about eighty tons burden, designed for navigation of the Zuider Zee. After battling the ice floes around Spitsbergen on a course which could have led only to the North Pole, the tiny craft had doubled back around North Cape and fought its way across the unexpectedly wide Atlantic.

The voyage had taken more than three months. The ship, one might think, would have been well battered; but, according to the muralists, the *vlieboot* which sailed so gallantly up the bay that summer day in 1609 possessed a "gorgeously painted and gilded hull, gay flags and streamers." To the Indians gathered on Manhattan Toe, it seems also to have possessed the semblance of a dream swimming.

Some said it was a huge canoe. Others said it was a house. All agreed that whatever it was, it contained Mannitto, "the Great or Supreme Being," come from beyond the horizon to punish

them for their sins or to reward them for their virtues. The first alternative seemed the more likely. As is always the case in Manhattan, a crowd gathered quickly. Chiefs from as far north as the present Twenty-third Street and from the neighboring shores of Hoboken came plunging and paddling to give the future metropolis its first recorded traffic jam.

Finally runners along the Brooklyn shore spotted on the front stoop of this house that walked on the water "a gorgeous godlike man in a red coat all glittering with gold lace." He was that great loser of the way, Henry Hudson.

What followed might have been the world's worst anticlimax, for communication between gods and men has always been difficult, and even between human beings when they do not speak the same language. So, after a few genuflections by members of the reception committee, and a few godlike gestures by the visiting celebrity, the whole affair bogged down into a very dull party and became hourly more embarrassing to one and all—which only goes to show that in relations both sacred and profane some common denominator is a first essential.

Now Hudson was a man not without resourcefulness. He sent one of his sailor boys back for a *hackhack* of some dark and potent liquid, in which he presently toasted the health and happiness of his new friends. The Indians, for their part, bowed low over a proffered glass and passed it solemnly from one to the other, uncertain which to fear the more: the effect of the liquid if they drank it, or the wrath of Mannitto if they didn't. Finally one of the younger sachems stepped boldly forth.

"I will drink it," he said, "let the consequences be what they may, for it is better for one chief to die than for a whole tribe to be destroyed."

The valiant warrior and his mates all feared the worst; and when having drained the cup, he swayed to and fro and finally sank helpless to the ground, the others were sure the worst had come. Presently, however, the recumbent brave began to smile, then to laugh, and when he had reached the state when he could again become verbally articulate, he regaled his mates with strange tales of how wonderful he felt, and urged them to partake also of the liquid happiness which their Mannitto had brought them. Before nightfall natives and visitors had become as

one. In the universal language of inebriety a common denominator had been found. Thereafter the Delawares and the Mohicans called the island on which the revels had been held *Manahachtanienk* or, as we say, Manhattan, which means in the Delaware language "the place where we all got drunk."

Hudson's own account of this incident, if he gave one, has disappeared. Some of the writings of his first mate, Robert Juet, have been preserved, but his thoughts seem to have been concentrated chiefly on the "very sweet smells" which emanated from the Staten Island shore. Juet said nothing about the party; but since he was the villain who later turned loose his commanding officer, the same great Henry Hudson, and eight others in a small boat without food or drink to perish in the icy waters of what is now called Hudson's Bay, his word would be of small value.

A really circumstantial account of the affair, however, is to be found in the writings of Bishop Heckewelder, a Moravian missionary to the Indians, who claims to have received it firsthand from an obviously intelligent Delaware brave. Bishop Heckewelder's book, *History of the Indian Nations,* was published by the American Philosophical Society in 1818, and seems to be a sound and scholarly account of Indian tradition. And Indian tradition, as Reginald Pelham Bolton, in his *New York City in Indian Possession,* published by the Museum of the American Indian, reminds us, "is as reliable as if graven in stone."

At least the red men's version of what happened that day on Manhattan Toe seems quite as reliable as any of the explanations subsequently devised by wishful-thinking white men. One such custom-made theory translates Manhattan as "place of surpassing beauty," another as "island of the hills." Now there undoubtedly *were* spots of beauty on Manhattan Island in the Indians' day and also hills of sorts in its upper reaches, but the part that the white man first saw and that he later chose for his home was a bleak and desolate marshy flat formed of mud and silt, a large part of which was known officially far into colonial days as "the Swamp." A still more made-to-order theory invents a mythical tribe of Indians, who seem to appear nowhere else in the history of either red or white America, but who rejoice in the convenient designation "Manhattoes," and thus by inference remove from

the fair name of our city, at least on its natal day, the curse of drink.

By some such fanciful device most of our solemn historians have managed to banish the notion that the name of our sacred isle was conceived in inebriety and preserved through the years in alcohol. Mrs. van Rensselaer, for instance, in her voluminous and often helpful work, brands the idea as fanciful, foolish, and perverted. Others have been even less happy about the whole thing. But no one can deny that the *Manahachtanienk* theory has the virtue of suitability.

"The place where we all got drunk!" What name could be more appropriate for Manhattan Toe? Not just in the alcoholic sense—although, as late as 1881 when most of the town's constructive drinking was being done farther up Broadway, a horrified chronicler of Manhattan doings stated that "in the vicinity of Wall Street alone, 7,500 drinks are taken and 150 bottles of champagne are disposed of every day," and even now the tired businessman of the Wall Street district not infrequently relieves his lassitude by hourly and half-hourly leanings against his favorite downtown bar. But there is so much about lower New York of a strictly nonalcoholic nature which is at the same time indubitably "cockeyed."

Take this matter of its discovery: it was made by Henry Hudson, an Englishman sailing a Dutch boat; or by Esteban Gomez, a Portuguese sailing a Spanish boat; or by Giovanni da Verrazano, an Italian sailing a French boat. Then the town's very name is woozy: first, New Amsterdam; then, New York; and briefly, for a few Gilbert-and-Sullivan months, when the Dutch took it back again, New Orange. But why new? The ground on which the skyscrapers of lower New York now stand is probably the oldest known part of the earth's surface; it dates back some 10,000,000 years to the time when that part of the North Atlantic coast was being "elevated"—we hope for the last time. And what about the island itself, more suitable for a lighthouse than a city—which anyone could see had no place to go but up? New York, I tell you, was drunk to begin with.

And man has done little to compensate for this original inebriety. Even if we must have a vertical city instead of a horizontal one, why have a West Street bordering the North River, which

isn't the North River but the Hudson, and a South Street bordering the East River, which isn't any river at all? And what about the staggering succession of booms, panics, corners, swindles, successes, and failures which have befallen the inhabitants of that vertical city on Manhattan Toe—men drunk with power and wealth, with fear and despair? Manhattan *is* the place where we all got drunk. If the *Manahachtanienk* theory isn't true, it should be.

2

HUDSON'S REPORT TO HIS EMPLOYERS MUST HAVE BEEN A favorable one, at least on the practical side, which was the side in which they were interested. They hadn't sent him across the ocean to find out how Staten Island smelled. They were businessmen, and they were looking for business.

This point cannot be too much emphasized in any realistic estimate of the forces which launched and have since dominated the city of New York. The religious and political aims which led to the founding of other American colonies did not actuate the traders of old Amsterdam. These men and their immediate English successors were not searching for freedom, but only for profit. And the city they built on Manhattan Island was from the beginning, and still is, primarily a commercial enterprise, a mart for truck and barter, bargain and sale.

So when Hudson told these money-hungry Amsterdam traders, as the Dutch historian DeLaet and others say he did, that the valley which now bears his name was "the finest land for cultivation that I ever in my life set foot upon," and that it abounded in "fur-bearing animals whose skins could be bought with trinkets and stuffs of the coarsest kinds," his bosses and some of their Amsterdam rivals promptly launched expeditions under various other sea rovers who, like Henry Hudson himself, served first one power and then another, but whose allegiance was only to themselves. These gentlemen proceeded to skin the fur-selling

Indians as neatly as the Indians themselves had previously skinned the fur-bearing animals.

Best known of these early trader-adventurers were two apparently authentic Dutchmen, Hendrik Christiaensen and Adriaen Block. The former founded Fort Nassau on the site of what is now Albany, and the latter, wintering in log huts on Manhattan Island, had the misfortune to lose his boat by fire. Resourceful, he built another, forty-four and a half feet long, eleven and a half feet wide, and of sixteen tons burden, the *Onrust* or *Restless;* and in it he sailed—the first man to do so—through Hell Gate, which is, according to whether your viewpoint on life is sweet or sour, a name derived either from *hellegat* (beautiful pass) or *hoilgat* (whirlpool channel). Quite as important, in his temporary shipyard, located probably on the shore of a creek which still runs under the street we now call Broad, shipbuilder Block founded the great industry which was later to produce the packets and clippers that were the glories of New York's short-lived maritime ascendancy.

The fur trade prospered, and the inevitable happened. The traders formed a company, which obtained from their High Mightinesses, who then ruled the Netherlands, a three-year franchise which gave it every conceivable power over Dutch America. This company made money, plenty; but, come 1621, its option was not picked up. A new group, presumably closer to their High Mightinesses than the first group, had formed a new organization, the Dutch West India Company, which obtained the coveted monopoly and henceforth exploited for its own profit the Dutch colony of New Netherlands until, in due course, the English took over and began exploiting it for theirs.

The first Dutch trading company had made no attempt to colonize, but the West India Company, realizing in 1623 the advantage of maintaining a permanent trading post, sent one Cornelis Jacobsen May with a ship's company of thirty families of Walloons—natives of the Liége section of what is now Belgium —to make permanent lodgment on Manhattan Island. In the *Proceedings of the New York Historical Society* Augustus Van Buren describes these first white settlers as follows: "Most of them could neither read nor write. They were a wild, uncouth, rough, and most of the time a drunken crowd. They lived in small

log huts, thatched with straw. They wore rough clothes, and in the winter were dressed in skins. They subsisted on a little corn, game, and fish. They were afraid of neither man, God, nor the devil. They were laying deep the foundation of the Empire State."

From which, and from a wealth of supporting evidence, we are justified in concluding that the progenitors of what the Sunday magazine essayists call our old Dutch aristocracy—and the same goes for our old English aristocracy—were for the most part something less than aristocratic. This is, of course, likely to be true of the early settlers in all colonized lands, but historians incline to become propagandists, and, especially when their own ancestors are involved, are human enough to try to hide certain self-evident facts. Mr. Dixon Wecter, who set himself the delicate task of recording *The Saga of American Society,* is one historian who has not yielded to that temptation, and does not hesitate to remind his readers that "the notorious family of prostitutes, paupers, epileptics, and criminals which sociologists have discreetly veiled under the name of 'Jukes,' is descended from early Dutch stock settled in New York State." Then he adds with pious shrewdness, "It is perhaps a Lenten thought for Knickerbockers."

Naturally, not all or even many of the Founding Fathers were the type to produce such undesirable progeny. The history of the colony, and later of the city, proves that beyond question. But most of them were the type that had not got along too well at home, and hence were willing to be sent to a wild country to serve these new-rich Amsterdam merchants "who—despised by the old aristocracy—longed to become founders of great estates and feudal barons, even by proxy, in lands beyond the seas." If, therefore, we have aristocrats in this country—and I refuse to be drawn into any discussion of the point—they are not Dutch or English or any other kinds of aristocrats, unless through generations of reasonably clean living and clear thinking, and through an alchemy which we do not fully understand but which is undoubtedly some compound of character and opportunity, they have become American aristocrats.

These Walloons who came over in 1623 were of Celtic origin and spoke French. They were joined presently by stragglers of many other races, tongues, and creeds, whose presence in the Dutch-owned colony may have been said to establish firmly the

Courtesy of the Museum of the City of New York

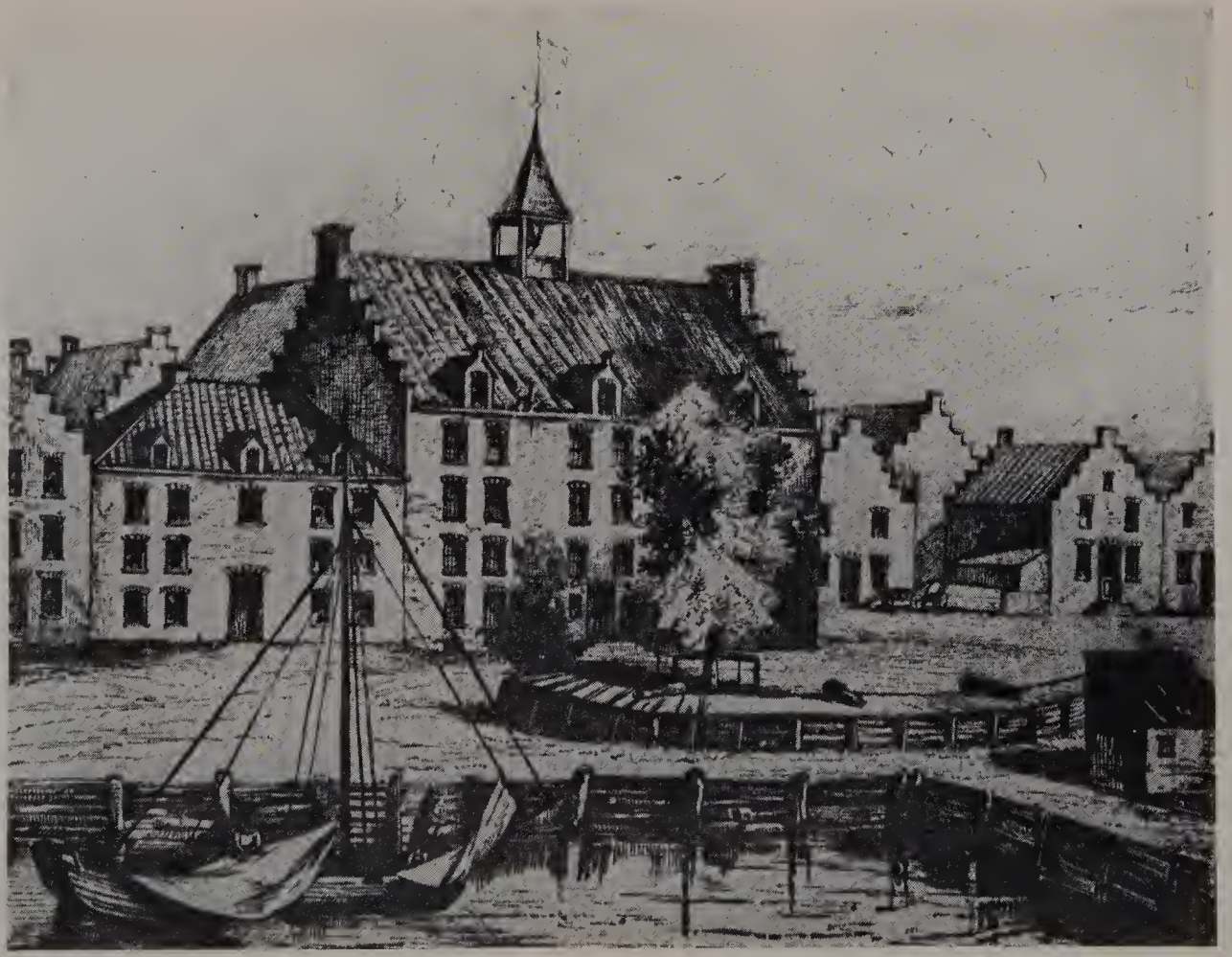
NEW AMSTERDAM IN 1660

(Topographical model by Charles S. Capeheart)

Courtesy of the Museum of the City of New York

STONE STREET, NEW AMSTERDAM, 1650

(Miniature group by Ned J. Burns)



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NEW YORK "STADT HUYS" IN 1679, CORNER PEARL STREET AND COENTIES SLIP

cosmopolitan quality of the island—foreshadowed in its "discovery" by a lot of fellows sailing in wrong boats, and characteristic of it through the years. It should come as no surprise, therefore, that in 1626, when the settlement had reached the dignity of some fivescore inhabitants, the West India Company chose a native of the German Duchy of Cleves, a German with a French name, to be the first director of the Dutch domain in America.

Peter Minuit was as much of an adventurer in his way as the sea rovers who had preceded him; only his business was colonizing, and he was good at it. His merits as an administrator, however, have been somewhat dwarfed by his alleged skill as a bargainer. Overshadowed by his successor twice removed, blustering, pernickety, and thoroughly lovable one-legged Petrus Stuyvesant, Minuit the Administrator has missed historical acclaim. Nevertheless, it was he who built the old Dutch town which Petrus Stuyvesant so boisterously ruled.

First, he built a fort, a hulking, four-bastioned affair of earth and wood and stone, large enough to accommodate the entire community in time of trouble. This structure, which stood where the Custom House now stands, faced, on the land side, even as the Custom House now does, the Bowling Green—then known as "The Plaine." On the water side it commanded both the North and East rivers. The director's house was inside the fort. The other buildings clustered around the fort's outer walls, and were—except for the fur warehouse, a thatch-roofed, two-story stone affair, the upper floor of which was used as a church—little more than huts, described by the Rev. Jonas Michaelius, New Amsterdam's first preacher, as "houses of the bark of trees." Michaelius also records that "several of the settlers even live in holes." Primitive, yes, this beginning of a metropolis, but it *was* a beginning, and Peter Minuit was the man who made it.

He also gave the town a government of sorts: a *schout-fiscal,* who combined in his person, not without a grim sense of pertinency, the offices of tax collector and sheriff; a *koopman* or secretary; and five councilors, who, according to the Dutch plan, represented not the people but the company. He sent his *koopman,* "a man of fair and genteel behavior," to Plymouth to confer with Governor Bradford as to an exchange of Dutch goods "either for beaver or any other wares or merchandise you should be

pleased to deal for"; this was the beginning of New York's still extensive coastwise trade. He divided most of the lower part of the island, except the fringe along the bottom edge, into farms or *bouweries,* the most famous of which was later immortalized, paradoxically it would seem, by the phrase, "I'll never go there any more." He re-established and encouraged the shipbuilding industry in which the resourceful Block had briefly engaged. And he gave a semblance of order to that most disorderly of all thoroughfares, which even now staggers around lower Manhattan to perform the seemingly impossible feat of beginning and ending at Broadway. This was Pearl Street, so named, some say, from the pearl-like shells which formed its surface, and it was destined for nearly a hundred years to be the town's Main Street, a much busier and better known thoroughfare than its neighbor, Broadway.

In all these activities Peter Minuit was that figure, rare among the Dutch and English rulers of New York, and not too common among the American rulers: an honest man. He was a humane man, too, and so far as possible he protected his fellow colonists, whose status was little better than that of serfs, from the inhumanity and insatiable greed of his Dutch employers. This trait defeated him. The new-rich Amsterdam traders could see no one's interests but their own, and those only as far as the nearest dike. So in 1632, on a charge which was either wholly trumped up or the result of an intelligence as shallow as the waters of the Zuider Zee, that the ships Minuit was building were too large and therefore too expensive to operate, they recalled their faithful servant and sent in his stead a nephew of the most powerful and certainly the most acquisitive of the absentee landlords, Kiliaen van Rensselaer, who had acquired from the Indians some 700,000 acres along the west bank of the Hudson in exchange for "certain quantities of duffels, axes, knives, and wampum."

By comparison with these wholesale steals of Kiliaen and his friends, Minuit's transaction with the Indians on Manhattan Island takes on an almost eleemosynary character. And not without some justice, for there is reason to believe that Peter, by his participation in what has become the most highly publicized bargain sale in history, was either uncommonly generous or very thoroughly "gypped."

No student of early American history would put it beyond Minuit, or even the more piously and less commercially inclined settlers of other colonies, to take advantage of their red-skinned neighbors by barter or any other means, if they could. Individual Indians, like other people, vary greatly as to intelligence; some tribes are also more intelligent than others; but to the white man of colonial times they were all "savages," just as today, to those who call their God Jehovah, all believers in God by any other name are "heathen." As such, they were considered fair game for whatever was currently the master race.

On the other hand, some Indians were as shrewd as their white customers, and in this case, again to quote from the reports of the Museum of the American Indian, the question of "whether the particular Indians who were called in and who made the arrangement for Manhattan with Minuit had any more right to make such a sale than others is open at least to doubt." In fact, there is a grave question as to whether the island was permanently inhabited or owned by *any* Indians.

It would be interesting, wouldn't it, if Minuit made the same slip that many another visitor has made of mistaking for real New Yorkers tourists who happened to be passing through?

Far be it from this chronicler, without more evidence than the meager records of the time produce, to detract from the accepted estimate of Peter Minuit's shrewdness as a businessman, but if his famous purchase of Manhattan Island for twenty-four dollars in beads and ribbons is examined in the light of other colonial administrators' transactions with the Indians, the wonder is not that Minuit paid so little as that he paid anything at all. In the fact of paying lay his shrewdness, since—granting that the vendors were the rightful owners—by purchasing the land for the "dollar and other valuable considerations" of his time, he obtained for his Dutch employers what few if any of the earlier colonists ever had: legal title to the land on which they settled.

Reams have been written and tempers lost over the ethics of this most famous of all real-estate transactions. The twenty-four dollars paid for these twenty-two square miles have been indignantly compared with the $622.29 paid some three centuries later for one square foot of those twenty-two square miles at the Bankers Trust Company corner of Nassau and Wall; but this

point of view ignores the fact that this otherwise incredible juxtaposition of digits is the graphic record, not of three centuries of landowning, but three centuries of "Men Working." Who shall say that the concentrated energy of so many human beings working so many years should not assay at more than six hundred dollars a foot? The miracle of New York is that it does.

3

PETER MINUIT'S SUCCESSOR, DESCRIBED AS "BIBULOUS, SLOW-witted and loose of life and morals," was the tippling, potbellied Wouter van Twiller, so gleefully lampooned by Diedrich Knickerbocker (Washington Irving) in his fictional but often truer-than-true *A History of New York.*

Aside from finishing the fort that Minuit had started and building within it a church for his crony (and later violent enemy), the colorful dominie with the thunderous name of Evardus Bogardus, this gluttonous, hypocritical fellow did little or nothing for Manhattan Island except to keep alive its reputation as "the place where we all got drunk." But for himself, between mornings after and nights before, he managed more successfully.

The present chronicler has searched the records diligently, but nowhere has he found evidence of any tenable reason why this soft, slothful, self-indulgent young man should have sought or accepted a post in this isolated, pioneer land, unless he believed that, by use of his public office for private ends, he might become almost as rich as his uncle Kiliaen. And the worst of it is he did.

He appropriated to his private use two of the six *bouweries* into which Minuit had divided the adjacent farm land—converting one into a tobacco plantation—and turned over the other four, rent free, to equally dishonest drinking companions. By judicious use of the usual beads and wampum, backed by his

position of power, he acquired large tracts of land from the Indians, including the island which is still called Governor's—although van Twiller was a director, not a governor—and connived at, if he did not participate in, bootlegging guns and ammunition to the Indians and poaching for private profit on the company's official monopoly of the fur trade.

By 1637, this shrewd, though drunken, lout had become one of the richest landowners in the colony, but his pilferings had become so barefaced that even his old friend Dominie Bogardus, who had himself become wealthy by the more circumspect method of marrying Anneke Jans, the town's richest widow, turned on his onetime patron and denounced him from the pulpit as "a child of the devil and a consummate villain." Bogardus, entrenched as he now was both materially and spiritually, was not one whose opposition could lightly be brushed aside, and before the year was out, nephew Wouter, in spite of Uncle Kiliaen's influence or perhaps with his consent, was out too.

His successor, William Kieft, was an administrator of the Minuit type. In spite of van Twiller's peculations and preoccupations, the exports of the colony had continued to increase, and business was good. The equipment, however, had thoroughly disintegrated. Kieft found the fort unfit for defense, the warehouse tumbling down, the mills idle, the ships unserviceable; and with praiseworthy energy he set himself to repair this devastation. He also encouraged agriculture by instituting two fairs, one for cattle and one for hogs, held annually on the Bowling Green, which brought so many strangers into town that it was necessary to build a hotel, the City Tavern, which later—quite in the tradition of Manhattan inebriation—served as the first city hall.

Kieft lacked color; but the same criticism could not be made of some of his fellow colonists; for example, Captain David De Vries, whose idea of a really good joke during van Twiller's time had been to announce the early-morning arrival of his ship at the Narrows with a booming of cannon, which would cause the garrison and its drink-befogged leader to tumble out of bed and, nightshirt-clad, man the fortress guns. In Kieft's reign he had turned to soberer pleasures, as befitted a soldier-sailor-adventurer turned landowner and leading citizen, but he has left a racy account of how Kieft, a temperate man himself, did not hesitate

to take advantage of the intemperance of others when the cause was such a good one as raising money to build Evardus Bogardus a new church—the intemperance in this case induced by the lavish hospitality of the Dominie himself at a festival to celebrate the marriage of his wife's daughter.

"The Director," writes De Vries, "thought this a good time for his purpose, and set to work after the fourth or fifth drink; and he himself setting a liberal example, let the wedding guests sign whatever they were disposed to give toward the church. Each then with a light head signed away at a handsome rate, one competing with the other; and although some heartily repented it when their senses came back, they were obliged to pay; nothing could avail against it."

Efficient, industrious, and obviously resourceful, William Kieft was doing a very good job, and in spite of a tendency toward tactlessness, might have held his portfolio for many years if he had not become involved in a senseless and senselessly cruel conflict with the Indians by attempting unwisely to impose upon them a tax which they could neither understand nor tolerate. The result was slaughter on both sides, which made of the once friendly Indians a real "red menace" for many years to come and fairly decimated the colony which Kieft had labored so hard to build. Bogardus, who seemed destined to be a Warwick in reverse, turned on Kieft as he had on his predecessor, and with the same result; but not until the Director, who seems to have lost his head completely, engaged in such childish tactics as beating drums and firing cannon outside the church he had himself so ingeniously financed, in an effort, which all agree was a vain one, to silence the bull-like bellowings of the indomitable dominie.

In 1646 William Kieft was relieved of his command; and the following year, after cleaning up a few details like being arrested for debt—the break had come, as such breaks so often do, at just the wrong time for William—the former director set out for Amsterdam in what was supposed to be the good ship *Princess*. Sailings being few in those days and the chances of picking just the fellow travelers one might wish even fewer, he found on the passenger list the never-to-be-forgotten name of Evardus Bogardus.

What happened aboard the *Princess* we do not know, but what happened *to* her we do know. A mistake in reckoning carried her far off her course, dashed her against the rocky coast of Wales, and sent the two whilom friends and enemies, in peace at last, to lie side by side in an ocean grave.

Meanwhile, by accident rather than by design of the slothful van Twiller or the querulous Kieft, a civilization of sorts had begun to operate in the primitive community on Manhattan Toe. A first clergyman had arrived in 1628, a first church in 1633; a first schoolmaster in 1633, a first school in 1637. The clerics—observant Michaelius and belligerent Evardus—we already know; but the trail which schoolmaster Adam Roelantsen was called upon to blaze was longer and more winding, and, since it did not lead as Bogardus' did through the green pastures of Manhattan's richest widow, far more arduous. In fact the money-mad Dutch company was so little interested in matters pedagogic that Adam was called upon to take in washing to eke out the tiny income allowed him. However, after four years of laundry work, he did get his school, as a tablet on the present Produce Exchange on Stone Street bears solemn witness.

In 1638 had come the first lease and the first title deed, the latter described as a ground brief or patent "to 100 morgens behind Curler's land," which required the beneficiary, one Hudde, to deliver annually to the director two capons for the Christmas holidays. Six years later, in 1644, Mary Gardiner made the first recorded will, in which she disposed of Gardiner's Island, destined to win fame of sorts as the supposed repository of Captain Kidd's treasure; in the same year Kieft's government put a tax on beer and, when the brewers refused to pay it, gave away their beer to the armed forces.

Social and domestic affairs were also rounding into form. In 1642, as we have already noted, came the first tavern, and in the same year the first white child was born in the colony. A long line of great hotels have descended from the former, and the late Walter P. Chrysler, according to *Who's Who in America,* descended from the latter, who bore the name of Tuenis van Dolsen.

Political progress, however—chiefly because of the tyrannical rule of the company and its representatives, and the greed of

the rich landowners or patroons, who dominated the life of the colony as the result of large and often fraudulent property grants —lagged far behind the clerical, pedagogical, and legal progress, even the gastronomical and biological. In this respect New Amsterdam was no better or no worse than the settlements to the north or the south of her. Democracy on the Atlantic seaboard was an unknown quantity. The Cradle of Liberty, in 1647, was still being rocked by a tyrant foot.

Business in immigrants was increasingly good, aided now by a gradual infiltration of religious and political refugees from various countries, who thus helped to maintain that basic Manhattan tradition of cosmopolitanism. In 1643, the year before William Kieft relinquished the directorial helm, the Jesuit, Father Jogues, reported that he found eighteen languages spoken in the supposedly Dutch colony.

There is no evidence that at the time this polyglot character of New Amsterdam's population was regarded as a menace, either to the town itself or to the as yet uncharted hinterland. There is a question as to whether it should now be so regarded; but there is no blinding the critical eye to the fact that millions of Americans consider it so, and that the cosmopolitan character of what was to be New York City, early implanted and consistently maintained, is exceedingly important, not alone because of its effect on the city itself, but because of the part it has played in forming the attitude toward the city of so many people in other sections of the country.

Some of this feeling seems unavoidable. New York suffers from that distrust of all great cities which exists in the minds of so many people who do not live in them. As early as 1789, when Senator William Maclay, "a gouty and rock-ribbed democrat from the Pennsylvania frontier above Harrisburg," came much against his will to the great city to serve in the new government of the United States, he expressed a doubt that "any honest man lived in that section." And this doubt has grown through the years until it has built a high wall between the nation's largest city and the nation itself.

The late Tom Reed of Maine, strolling along upper Fifth Avenue with a friend, was asked why so many New Englanders

disliked New York. Czar Reed's wise old eyes swept the imposing row of mansions overlooking the Park.

"I guess," he said, "it's just plain high-minded envy."

There is that, of course. But the feeling of the rest of the country toward New York lies deeper than envy—deeper even than the conviction that the metropolis has effected a Morgan-size merger of the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah, Monte Carlo and Port Said. In the prohibition era, when the New York State legislature passed a bill authorizing the sale of 2.75-per-cent beer, the late Senator Sheppard of Texas solemnly declared that New York was a revolutionary and anarchistic state; and a religious weekly once remarked that "Manhattan was an alien island off the coast of the United States, rolling in wealth, bursting with pride, scorning the ten commandments."

Through all this criticism of New York, whatever its immediate genesis, the thoughtful reader will note that there runs one strain which hints at the basic cause of America's attitude toward her greatest city. These words continually appear: European, alien, revolutionary, anarchistic. They reflect a sincere belief that New York is a foreign city, lacking in American ideals and therefore dangerous. This conviction is based on the inescapable fact that it is "the only metropolis in the world, perhaps in history, more than three-fourths of whose population is alien (by birth or blood inheritance) from that of the nation upon which it lives." Whether this fact has affected the history of New York for better or worse, perhaps no one knows; but that the fact is a fact, and that it stems back to the very foundations of the city, must be taken into consideration by anyone who wishes to know not only what New York is and how it got that way, but why the nonurban moralist regards it as not only a gay, bedizened wench but, what is to him almost worse than sin itself, a gay, bedizened foreign wench; and why the nonurban politician sees in its continued existence a real threat to the republic.

This attitude has been described as hatred. I suggest that it is fear, and fear which, though doubtless undeserved, is understandable; but not understood, we may be sure, or even glimpsed, by the new director, peg-legged Petrus Stuyvesant, by long odds the most colorful figure of colonial times, who was to rule New

Amsterdam for nearly two decades and who learned to love the town so well that he returned, even after it had become New York, to live and die in it, still loving and still loved.

(NOTE: As indicative of the plethora of misinformation about the history of our largest city, the Englishman, Henry Hudson, is usually referred to even in some of the schoolbooks as Hendrik Hudson, while the indubitable Dutchman, Petrus Stuyvesant, is invariably called Peter. We can't admit the Hendrik, although understanding the prideful Dutch's nationalistic attempts to adopt Henry along with his "fur-bearing animals," but, lest we seem either precious or pontifical, we shall bow to the will of the majority and henceforth call Petrus Peter.)

More even than most men of his time, Peter Stuyvesant was insulated against ideologies. The crusty old martinet who had ruled Curaçao for the West India Company, the man whom Washington Irving called "mettlesome, obstinate, leathern-sided, lion-hearted Peter Stuyvesant"—Peter the Great he might also be called—sailed into New Amsterdam harbor on a May day in 1647 without wasting a single tear on the Cradle of Liberty. His job was to take over, and take over he did.

Planting his peg leg firmly on Manhattan Toe, Peter took a good look at the one hundred and twenty men and women who met him, and delivered himself of the following inaugural address:

"I shall govern you as a father his children, for the advantage of the chartered West India Company, and these burghers, and this land."

There is no reason to believe that the order in which Peter arranged his responsibilities was on an ascending scale. Rather, it was a straightforward statement of just what he construed the relative importance of his obligations to be. If, as we are informed, the declaration seemed to these survivors of the ineptnesses of van Twiller and the cruelties of Kieft somewhat in the nature of an Atlantic Charter, it was simply because they knew that either of the new director's immediate predecessors would have put a period instead of a comma after the word "Company."

Unnoticed amid all these excitements, there had occurred in 1644 another event which was also destined to be of some signifi-

cance to New York City and State, the nation and the world: the arrival of Claes Martinsson van Rosenvelt, the common ancestor—as Theodore Roosevelt used to say, the "very common ancestor"—of the twenty-sixth and thirty-second presidents of the United States.

4

PETER STUYVESANT'S ADOPTED CHILDREN WERE NO STRANGERS to paternalism in its sterner and more disciplinary phases. They were, for example, forbidden by police regulation even to give strangers more than one meal or one night's lodging without first notifying the director. And the punishments meted out to them for their sins were chiefly of the nursery variety. It is recorded, for example, that Hendrik Jansen, for "scandalizing" Director Bill Kieft, was sentenced to stand daily in the entrance to the fort at the ringing of the bell and beg the Director's pardon, and that Grietje Peiners, for a similar offense against Dominie Bogardus, was ordered to tell the Council that the minister was an honest and pious man.

In only one recorded instance did the dispensers of punishment display any notable imagination. We quote: "For drawing a knife upon a person, Cuysbert van Registard is sentenced to throw himself three times from the sailyard of the yacht *Hope* and receive from each sailor three lashes." Disregarding the satiric note in the name of the yacht, we wonder, and we are sure Cuysbert wondered, how many sailors there were each to deliver three lashes.

These and many other instances of early Dutch doings which seldom find their way into the solemn history books are set forth with commendable good humor in the brief series of *Almanacs for New Yorkers* edited under the suave guidance

of the Messrs. Adams, Canby, Fadiman, Van Doren, *et al.,* with a financial assist from the now deceased Works Progress Administration. The present narrator has not hesitated to borrow freely—with credit whenever possible—from these and other informal accounts of early Manhattan history which make more sense than many more pretentious volumes, because they picture informally the actual life of the people.

For example, it gives a satisfaction not wholly devoid of sociological and aesthetic overtones to learn that "New York's first recorded, authentic minstrel was William Gerritson, who enlivened the colony in mid-seventeenth century with his tuneful and aromatic ballads off-the-cuff. On June 10, 1645, however, Gerritson was hailed to court, and there pleaded guilty to yodeling a defamatory ballad about the Rev. Douty and his daughter. The unhappy minstrel was sentenced to be tied up to the May Pole in the Merry Mount in the old Dutch fort, with his libelous verse over his head. Furthermore, should he think up and yodel another such, he would be flogged, and banished."

One conclusion to be drawn from these and similar incidents is that these were harsh days in which the fine arts of poetry and music were not conspicuously encouraged on Manhattan Toe. Another is the fact that paternalism then as now tends to impinge on the private life of the individual. A prime example of that tendency was the sign posted, presumably by order of the director, in New Amsterdam taverns: "No More than 5 to Sleep in One Bed."

The poet's comments on the Dominie and his daughter have presumably long since gone the way of most topical jingles. Their scandalous nature, however, is suggested by the severity of the punishment incurred. This would seem to be the first recorded evidence that even on Manhattan Toe sex was rearing its not always unlovely head. The position of women in the new community is best indicated by the complete lack of authentic information on it or them. The Walloons, who were imported for the specific purpose of colonization, and therefore of propagation, brought their women with them. For the most part, however, the founders of New Amsterdam were sea rovers and adventurers, men without women or, rather, men with women in every port.

What women did these rough fellows find in the port of New

Amsterdam? Not white ones, surely, for there weren't enough to go around, and the few that were there, if we may judge by the prodigious families they produced, were almost continually pregnant. Red ones? If so, the scholarly and high-minded ladies and gentlemen who have recorded the history of these early days —many of them descendants of these same adventurers—have been too shocked to say so. It is unbelievable, though, that these untamed huskies, who indulged themselves in orgies of eating and drinking and disorderly conduct, denied themselves the comforts and pleasures of sexual relationship.

Could it be, as has happened in every invasion, even recent ones, that the invaded males of the Indian tribes resented the raping of their women even more than the robbing of their petty cash accounts?

All of which is sheerest speculation. It may or may not prove that New Amsterdam's riffraff was more responsible than William Kieft's tax collectors for the Indian uprising which had decimated the little colony. It does, however, point the finger to still another outstanding difference between New Amsterdam and the other settlements on the Atlantic seaboard, which were, most of them, family affairs. Connubial bliss among the Massachusetts Pilgrims, for instance, could not wait to get to Plymouth to produce its first child, but caused a forced stopover for obstetrical purposes in Provincetown Harbor on Cape Cod. The first male child born to the settlers on Manhattan Toe came, as we have seen, more than thirty years after Hudson's arrival and some years after Minuit's. New Amsterdam was, and some say New York still is, a man's world.

Of political progress on Manhattan Island up to the time Father Stuyvesant addressed his children there had been practically none, and little was to be expected of Peter himself. Like a far greater statesman of our own time, he had not become the West India Company's first minister to loose the company's iron grip on its western outpost. The new director not only believed in the sacredness of vested interests but did his damnedest to make those vests bulletproof. Particularly he rejected anything which smelled even faintly of a reflection on the dignity of his own office, which he considered pretty august. When a group of his new neighbors ventured to call on him to offer helpful suggestions

about improving the defenses of the colony, he is quoted as saying: "We derive our authority from God and the Company, not from a few ignorant subjects, and we alone can call the inhabitants together."

Later, when two of the colony's leading citizens, Cornelis Melyn and Jochim Juyter, petitioned Father Stuyvesant for an official inquiry into his predecessor's odious behavior during the Indian Wars, he angrily retorted that "it was treason to complain of one's magistrates whether there was cause or not," and subsequently saw to it that the two petitioners were found guilty, in a sort of Dreyfus-trial procedure, of rebellion and sedition for venturing so to complain. In fining them and banishing them from the colony, he said: "If I was persuaded that you would bring this matter before the High Mightinesses, I would have you hung to the highest tree in New Netherlands."

Peter may later have wished that he had, because the rebellious Melyn and Juyter did escape to Holland—from the very ship which sank Kieft and Bogardus—and did succeed in garnering some measure of self-government from the States General and their High Mightinesses. But if Stuyvesant was at all daunted by their success, he did not show it. For a man of violent temper, he was a peculiar combination of resiliency and tenacity. Underneath his crusty exterior he was a much more resourceful person than any of his predecessors.

Kieft's idea of popular government in action had been a council of two members, himself and another fellow, with the additional precautionary proviso that the other fellow should have one vote and that he should have two. He had been, however, unwittingly responsible for the beginning of real popular government on Manhattan Island. As a war emergency measure—the phrase sounds strangely familiar to the ears of a later generation—he chose a council of twelve dollar-a-year men to assist him in his campaign against the Indians. When they disagreed with him, he dissolved them. But, what with the Indians' arrows and Evardus Bogardus' siege guns, Kieft was slipping so fast that at war's end he was forced to suffer the indignity of permitting the election by restricted popular vote of a Council of Eight—and it was the complaints to the home office by this body which ultimately caused the Director's recall.

Stuyvesant's attitude toward the council can be judged by his treatment of Melyn and Juyter, two of its leading members. However, he could not repair the dilapidated defenses of New Amsterdam without taxation, and he could not get taxation without some sort of representation. The result was the creation of a new body, selected by the Director from candidates proposed by the electorate, which was called the Nine Men. Its young and vigorous leader, Adrian van der Donck, actually had the spirit to make the long journey to Holland and extract from their High Mightinesses a primitive form of municipal government patterned after that of old Amsterdam.

Again Father Stuyvesant—who had begun by jailing Adrian and unseating him from the board of Nine Men—yielded gradually if not gracefully to pressure, both economic and political, and somewhat grumpily proclaimed at the feast of Candlemas in 1653 the establishment of the new city government, which, as has been said, set up shop in the City Tavern which fronted the East River on Pearl Street at Coenties Slip.

However, the triumph of militant democracy was not so complete as van der Donck, Melyn, and Company had hoped, because doughty old Peter blithely ignored the charter provision that the municipal officials should be elected by the people instead of appointed by him. Moreover, he insisted on presiding at the Monday morning sessions of the new solons and, by the strength of his personality and the poundings of his wooden leg, so dominated the assembly that his will and only his will was done. The suspicion will not down that, even under our carefully guarded present-day democratic institutions, the old gentleman would be equally effective at a meeting of either a Fusion-controlled or Tammany-controlled Board of Estimate.

Freedom of worship was another item which found no place on Stuyvesant's agenda. He had been born into a family steeped in Dutch Reformed Calvinism, and although he had probably not worked very hard at it in Curaçao—Calvinism has seldom thrived near the equator!—he found in the bracing atmosphere of the North Atlantic just the stimulus required to make his inherited bigotry break out in the most virulent form.

The transatlantic tours of Melyn, Juyter, van der Donck, and others had created in Europe a state of awareness about New

Amsterdam which, combined with the well-earned Dutch reputation for religious toleration, drew a rapidly increasing quota of immigrants whose aims were spiritual as well as practical: Lutherans from Germany and Sweden, Waldenses from Piedmont, Huguenots from France, Presbyterians from Scotland, Independents from England, Anabaptists from Switzerland, Jews from Germany and Spain.

This unexpected and heterogeneous increase in Father Stuyvesant's family irked him no end. He couldn't refuse admission to these newcomers because he needed man power to develop the colony's latent resources; and these sobersided religionists, with their eyes peeled for salvation, were far more dependable as laborers than most of the original settlers, whose eyes were frequently half sealed by beer. Absenteeism from work among the convivial Dutch flourished like tulip culture in their native land. But these itinerant martyrs were of another breed. They worked while the guzzlers slept. And Peter Stuyvesant was a practical man.

Nevertheless, the bylaws of the Dutch West India Company, which were to Peter Stuyvesant a revised version of the Ten Commandments, decreed that there should be only one form of religious worship in New Amsterdam and that, Dutch Reformed. So old Peter, who was even more of a company man than a Calvin man, reacted to the double impact and the ready-made opportunity with his usual mettlesome violence. He banished a Baptist cleric found saving souls in the waters of the local swamp; fined and imprisoned Lutheran parents who refused to have their children baptized in the officially approved manner by the Dutch Reformed Church, and condemned to two years at hard labor with a wheelbarrow a Quaker preacher who, having been expelled from Puritanical Boston, had sought refuge in supposedly tolerant New Amsterdam.

The last named, one Robert Hodgson, either because he was a man of spirit or just allergic to wheelbarrows and all they implied, staged a sit-down strike for which he was stripped to the waist, hung up by his thumbs, and beaten until unconscious by a stout Negro armed with ropes and rods. But, as in the case of his battles with the politicos, the Director's overzeal in punishing the Quaker, Hodgson, in accordance with what he conceived

to be the home office policy, brought him a deserved rebuke from abroad and a sharp shrinkage in popularity at home, which caused him to divert his energies into wars more suited to his training and temperament.

Peter Minuit, a bit disgruntled by his unwarranted dismissal by his Dutch employers, had persuaded Queen Christina of Sweden to take a hand in American colonization; and in 1638, while Kieft was busy cleaning up after van Twiller, he had led a party of Scandinavians to the west shore of what is now Delaware Bay and established what he called, in accordance with the quaint custom of colony establishers, New Sweden. Unlucky Minuit, on his way back to Europe in search of more colonists, foundered in a West Indian hurricane, but the colony he founded, like the one he had founded on New York Bay, grew and prospered until it became a thorn in the flesh of the Dutch West India Company, and something more than a pea in the shoe of one-shoed Peter Stuyvesant.

At last, in 1655, word came from Holland to drive the Swedes out of Delaware, and the gallant old soldier put a new shine on the silver ornaments on his wooden leg, and a new edge on his long unused sword, loaded seven hundred armed men into seven ships, and generally did such a constructive job on the unsuspecting Swedes that they were glad to be allowed to lie down and play dead. New Sweden, itself, as a rival of New Amsterdam, did not need to play dead; it *was* dead.

His reputation fattened by this achievement, Peter was soon rushing back to save his children on the home front from what threatened to be a repetition of Kieft's Indian wars.

5

AS AN ADMINISTRATOR STUYVESANT'S ONE NOTABLE ACHIEVEment up to this time had been the re-establishment of friendly relations with the tribes his predecessor had treated so cruelly. Trained by long years of dealing with aborigines who were black, he was not afraid to look upon them when they were red. The Indians, on their side, conceived immediately an understandable liking for this hearty, swaggering, picturesque old party, who reminded them somehow of that "gorgeous god-like man" who had so handsomely entertained their fathers at that first memorable drinking party on Manhattan Toe. And for nearly a decade there was peace.

But with the paternal hand temporarily withdrawn, one of Peter's adopted children, a burgher named van Dyck, shot and killed an Indian squaw whom he found poaching in his peach orchard. Whereupon the lady's relatives and friends, some two thousand strong, knowing well that Peter the Great and his army were far afield, bore down on the town, liquidated van Dyck and a hundred others, took one hundred and fifty prisoners, destroyed three hundred homes, and retired by canoe to prepared positions on Governor's Island.

In this situation Stuyvesant acted with commendable good judgment and, for him, unprecedented self-control. Instead of attacking the enemy at once, and thus precipitating a bloody war which would have alienated permanently the normally friendly

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FORT GEORGE AND THE CITY OF NEW YORK, *CIRCA* 1740

From the J. Clarence Davies Collection, Museum of the City of New York

SOUTH-EAST VIEW OF NEW YORK, *CIRCA* 1763, SHOWING KING'S COLLEGE

(Thomas Howdell, artist; P. Canot, engraver)

natives, he openly and somewhat ostentatiously prepared for such an attack on a scale hitherto unimagined by the Indians. Then, in a series of adroitly executed peace feelers, he turned on the old charm. Impressed alike by the efficiency of his preparedness and the renewed contact with his warm personality, the Indians promptly ended the war which they themselves would never have begun, released their prisoners, and over many pipes and a few *hackhacks* of firewater signed with their good friend Peter a new and lasting treaty of peace.

They did more than that: by their surrender, so closely following that of the Swedish interlopers to the south, they returned Father Peter to the hearts of his countrymen. The burghers, rescued by their leader first from commercial competition from the Swedes, and then from mortal danger from the Indians, forgot his pernickety ways and remembered instead that it was good old Peter who, "to spread aboundance in the land, had obliged the bakers to give thirteen loaves to the dozen," and who made it a misdemeanor for any person "to create difficulties between Masters and Servants" or "to induce Servants to come and live with him."

If Father Stuyvesant had been a man of thought rather than action, he would have ruminated long over the transitory emotions behind the change which had come over the spirit of his children's dreams and had suddenly elevated him into a hero's role. If he had been a reading man, he might have recalled with profit that in this world "all things are in perpetual flux and fleeting." He might even have foreseen that, less than a decade later, with British men-of-war sailing up the harbor, these same children would desert his courageous, forthright leadership for the timid counsels of collaboration.

But perhaps such perspicacity on Peter's part would have made small difference in our fate or his, for it seems quite impossible to account by the chilly rules of logic for the sudden transformations which happen to men and peoples in times of stress even in our own day. The answer, presumably, is that in the heat of battle the past obliterates itself, and change—which is, inconsistently, the only consistent thing in human behavior—has unrestricted sway.

That this is especially true of American behavior can be proved by thousands of examples. How often on summer afternoons has

the miracle of Peter Stuyvesant's transformation happened to the wretched fellow who has just muffed an easy fly, but on his next trip to the plate, with the boos of the crowd still ringing in his ears, knocks a home run with the bases full, or on afternoons in the early fall when the goat of last year's world series becomes the hero of this—or vice versa!

Father Stuyvesant glowed right warmly in the sun of his new-found popularity. Doubtless he accepted it as no more than his due, but it mellowed him just the same. He didn't beat up any more parsons. He even allowed the citizens to elect their own representatives. He went to the former City Tavern more often to drink a friendly mug of beer and less often to drive the burghers to do his will. His own restless energies he expended on such measures of community interest as the shortsighted policies of the West India Company permitted him.

It is difficult to evaluate, at a distance of three hundred years, a man who seemed even to his contemporaries now a tyrant and now a jolly good fellow. Most of Peter's official harshnesses, like his political and social philosophies, were those of his time and of the company whose representative he was.

That he had had always his gentler side there can be no doubt. His wife, Judith Bayard, was a woman of culture, who spoke several languages and served as interpreter for the polyglot citizenry of the colony, and who presided with grace and dignity over her husband's two comfortable homes, the official town mansion, a roomy stone house near what is now South Ferry, and the country house "way out of town" near the present junction of Tenth Street and Third Avenue, where the master indulged his love for flowers and fruit trees. (A pear tree which he brought from Holland survived where he planted it at Third Avenue and Thirteenth Street through the Revolution and the Civil War until the great snow of 1867.) Relations between the elder Stuyvesants seem to have been domestically ideal, and their hospitality to their children's friends was proverbial. The country house especially was always available for young people's festivities.

Diedrich Knickerbocker, who has few nice things to say about the Dutch rulers of New York, paints many a pretty picture of Father Peter at play. For example, at the weekly dance assembly on the green lawn of the Battery: "Here he would smoke his pipe,

crack his joke, and forget the rugged toils of war in the sweet oblivious festivities of peace, giving a nod of approbation to those of the young men who shuffled and kicked most vigorously and now and then a hearty smack, in all honesty of soul, to the buxom lass who held out longest and tired down every competitor—infallible proof of her being the best dancer."

Granting that this Washington Irving picture of the man is more the result of imagination than research, we must admit that Irving's imagination seems often more reliable than less able men's fussing about among dull documents which have little to recommend them except their dust. In present-day vernacular, Peter Stuyvesant "had something." Perhaps it was his childlikeness. Seen through the inverted telescope of time, his struttings and stompings, his peacock preenings, even his cruelties, seem more like the antics of a naughty child than those of a sinister adult, or, to speak more accurately, like a figure in a comic strip. I do not mean to be disrespectful to a man of undoubted courage, who spent his life in loyal devotion to undeserving employers; but in many unmistakable aspects Peter Stuyvesant comes through the haze of history as a sort of pre-Disney Donald Duck or, when the urge to do battle overcame his better nature, as a fat, choleric, one-legged Popeye surcharged with an overdose of spinach. A comic figure, yes, but a lovable one, and quite the most durable of all the gallant men and women who have stalked the Manhattan scene.

His name alone, of all those which graced or stained the records of the old Dutch town, is known to the modern man in the New York street, and yet his only lasting contribution to the city's future was an unwilling and, at the moment, ignominious surrender. Curious, isn't it, how personality lives while achievement dies? The fact that Peter Stuyvesant survived his day, that he even survived the turning of the glory of victory into the ignominy of defeat, and still holds the affection of thousands of hero-worshipers, is the true measure, perhaps not of his greatness, but of his rarity

"Until quite recent years," writes Mrs. Schuyler van Rensselaer, "the children of New York believed, as firmly as they believe in the visits of the Dutch St. Nicholas on Christmas Eve,

that on each New Year's Eve . . . old Peter rises from his grave and stumps about Manhattan on his wooden leg to note the changes that the twelvemonth has brought about."

That—in a town where the clock of memory ticks as fast as it does in New York—is fame.

6

THE DUTCH COLONISTS AND THEIR FELLOW TOWNSMEN OF assorted origin lived in daily and nightly fear that the English, who had already overrun Connecticut and encroached on Long Island and Westchester, would sweep down on Manhattan from the north and east and push the defenseless village into the sea. In 1653, the feeling became so strong that peppery Peter, unable longer to stomach the company's unwillingness to separate itself from the funds essential to the community's defense, set out with his customary vigor to raise the money himself. And he did. He abstracted a grand total of $2020 from the thrifty citizenry—the largest contribution being eighty dollars—and built what has been referred to as "the Wall."

The English never came, at least from that direction, and the wall was never used for defense. But it was a nice wall, with a rather elaborately decorated Water Gate at the East River end, and a plainer Land Gate at the corner of Wall Street and Broadway, in front of the plot on which Trinity Church now stands. And its presence had one far-reaching result which Father Peter, being the last person one would accuse of clairvoyance, doubtless did not foresee. This barrier which he had built, although no Great Wall of China, was sufficiently impressive and sufficiently durable to confine the growth of the little community for many years to that small portion of Manhattan Island between the fort and the wall. With some three thousand miles of undeveloped

territory to the west of them, the burghers nevertheless were so impressed with the necessity of remaining behind Peter's wall that they even went to the trouble and expense of filling in land to relieve the resultant congestion.

It is possible, of course, that they would have done this filling in anyhow, since reclaiming land from the sea is an old Dutch custom, like canal-building, which they also introduced into downtown New York. Another custom, which they brought with them and which was destined to become an outstanding feature of New York residential architecture up to and including the brownstone-front era, was the raising of the "best rooms" in the house to a level well above the street, with the resultant steep flight of steps and the inevitable high stoop. The original idea, of course, was to protect the family in case a hole should develop in the dikes and the tulip beds go under water. The fact that there were no dikes on Manhattan Toe and only a negligible number of tulip beds did not allay the inherited fear of death on land from peril by the sea.

Meanwhile, the Nine Men, freed from continual batterings by Peter's tempestuous nature, gave New Amsterdam quite the most civil rule it had yet experienced.

We are told that "in 1653, if a boy or a maid wanted to be wed and the old folks objected, the kids could have their parents haled before the City Fathers. Unless the parents or guardian could show just cause for withholding their approval, they were firmly, even forcibly, put in their places and the wedding was on." Failure on the part of the male betrothed to go through with the ceremony, we are told by the same authority (one of those unawed *Almanacs*), was dealt with summarily. For example, "in 1658, Nicholas Albertson decided he didn't want to marry his betrothed, so she complained, so he had his head shaved, and was flogged, and had his ears bored, and was put to work for two years."

Justice of sorts was meted out to sundry other offenders. One Jan Peech, a veteran trader with the Indians, and his wife, Long Mary, kept a tavern near the *Vly* which was famous for long, loud, and wet celebrations. Jan was once charged with maintaining "drinking clubs on divers nights . . . with dancing, jumping, and entertaining of disorderly people; also tapping during preach-

ing, and that there was a great noise made by drunkards"; but his sins were forgiven him on the ground that he was "burthened with a houseful of children and more besides"—the latter being presumably Long Mary, who was finally banished for selling liquor to the Indians, "for which she had long been famous."

Two busy public officials of this period were the town chimney sweep, whose duty it was to "frequently passe through the Streets, Lanes & Passages," and to make "such noise or cry as may discover him to the inhabitants," and the town bell ringer, who, besides dangling intermittently from a bell rope, "was also court messenger, grave digger, chorister, runner, and sometimes schoolmaster." More important than either of these worthies, and perhaps quite as busy in this toyshop town which had risen on Manhattan Toe, were the much-needed first fire inspectors introduced in 1655.

The ferry business to Brooklyn was put on a more regular schedule, and permission was granted one William Jansen "to work a ferry between Bergen [New Jersey] and the Island of Manhattan." Reclamation of land from the sea not only proceeded apace but in a more orderly manner: in 1654, the shore from the *Stadt Huys* to the *Neere Gracht* (described baldly as "the corner of the ditch") was filled in with dirt and rubbish and neatly planked up. In 1659, a second and larger public wharf was built at the foot of what is now Moore Street, and brickyards were established for the manufacture of the black and yellow bricks which had formerly been imported at great expense from Holland.

The coastwise trade started by Minuit increased in amount and profit, since the sea was still the safest route for both freight and passenger traffic between the fast-growing colonies. Also the seafaring habits of the Dutch, the location of the settlement on a great harbor at the mouth of a great river, and its very latitude and longitude contributed to the upbuilding of an international trading center, which was to remain even unto our own times the connecting link between inland America and the European world.

To encourage this legitimate commerce Stuyvesant's government enacted several measures intended to combat the prosperous smuggling trade which had begun in van Twiller's time and was

the foundation of many New York fortunes now possessed by the city's rich and great. Success in this direction was meager, since many "reputable" citizens, as in more recent prohibition days, regarded such efforts to enforce the company's monopoly in fur and other trading as an infringement on their sacred right to smuggle. Commerce in slaves continued but, for economic rather than social or moral reasons, never became so productive as in the agricultural South. Besides, many slaves literally took to the woods and found warm welcome in Indian wigwams.

Legal freedom for New York Negroes had to wait another hundred years, during which frightful scenes of rioting and bloodshed were enacted in the city's streets. To the credit of Stuyvesant and his council, however, it should be noted that they took, in 1657, what was for their time a long step toward universal political equality by admitting New York's Jewish population to full citizenship rights.

Beneath these creditable signs of an awakening public conscience, however, there remained an under structure of social, political, and financial injustice for which the feudal grants of the West India Company, used by their beneficiaries, the patroons —and in van Twiller's time by the company's own representatives—for private profit and aggrandizement, were chiefly to blame. And these injustices inherent in the Dutch system of patroonship, even under a mellowing regime like Stuyvesant's, were still high among the motivating factors in the approaching downfall of New Amsterdam.

The end came suddenly. When the sun rose on the morning of September 6, 1664, Manhattan Toe looked Dutch, and officially was Dutch. By noon it was a British possession.

Earlier rumors that Britain and Holland were staging another of their little wars had made small impression on the New Amsterdam isolationists. Like many another New Yorker of a later era, they felt safe behind their Atlantic sea wall from the repercussions of European strife. Moreover they owed little or no loyalty to their Dutch landlords. Many, perhaps the majority, possessed not even the tie of consanguinity. Since 1658 it had been necessary, in order to make official edicts generally understandable, to issue them in French and English as well as in Dutch. Even the original Dutch settlers, if they had been fortu-

nate enough to penetrate the small but all-powerful propertied class, were more inclined to take a chance on a negotiated peace than on any defense which Stuyvesant and his handful of faithful soldiers could hope to make in a fort rendered almost surely defenseless by the company's policy of penury.

The words of Mrs. Nicolaes Meyer, translated with some idiomatic license but on the whole correctly by Mr. Rodman Gilder, were doubtless quite representative of the prevailing sentiment on that September morn when Britain's Atlantic fleet dropped anchor in the bay.

"Those lousy dogs," said Mrs. Meyer, referring to the soldiers in the fort, "want to fight because they have nothing to lose, whereas we have our property here, which we should have to give up."

So it was that when the town's erstwhile idol peg-legged his way down the *Perel Straat* to lead his people against the enemy, he found himself a leader without a following. In vain he pleaded, cajoled, threatened, swore, and stamped his wooden leg. Craven of heart, deaf of ear, the populace refused to obey him. Peace in our time and His Grace, the Duke of York, had already prevailed on Manhattan Toe.

But Peter Stuyvesant's personality was potent, even in defeat. His British captors did not throw the gallant old soldier into irons but gave him safe conduct back to the Zuider Zee to tell the old Amsterdam skinflints what had happened to them. How Peter fared in his delicate mission we do not know. The bearer of bad news seldom receives the fatted calf. This one, however, had a strong argument to present to his late employers, who had steadfastly refused to spend money on implementing the colony's defenses.

"The Fort," he had written them, "is situated in an untenable place, where it was located on the first discovery of New Netherland, for the purpose of resisting an attack of the barbarians rather than an assault of European arms; having, within pistol shot on the north and southeast sides, higher ground than that on which it stands, so that, notwithstanding the walls and works are raised highest on that side, people standing and walking on that high ground can see the soles of the feet of those on the esplanades and bastions of the Fort."

Perhaps the impossibility of defending so defenseless a town against four British men-of-war in a position to shell it at will penetrated the skulls of the Dutch moneygrubbers. Perhaps the impact of Stuyvesant's personality, experienced at close range, was too much even for them. Anyhow, they didn't throw him into irons, either, but permitted him to return to the land which, if he could not rule, he could still love.

There, in his comfortable *Bouwerie* home, surrounded by his family, his flowers, and his fruit trees, he lived until 1672 what were probably the happiest years of his tumultuous life. His widow survived him ten years, and by her will established St. Mark's Church on a site in the old *Bouwerie,* where an ivy-surrounded plaque marks the gallant old man's grave and, incidentally, preserves for posterity his proper name of Petrus.

7

LOOK WHO'S HERE! AL SMITH. OF COURSE, NO HISTORY OF New York would be complete without him. He was, as *The New York Times* stated on his seventieth birthday, the "New Yorker of New Yorkers." Nevertheless the reader with an orderly mind may be surprised to find Al following so closely on the heel of Peter Stuyvesant. Yet what a team they would have made!—not, perhaps, as administrators, for friends and foes agree that Al knew everything there was to know about the governing business, whereas Peter obviously knew practically nothing. But as a song-and-dance team on amateur nights at the *Bouwerie* Theater—they came from the same part of town—One-leg Peter and One-tune Al would never have got the hook.

But it is neither as statesman nor as vaudevillist that the shade of Al Smith is so soon invoked to help motivate this tale; but rather as a turner of phrases. When Al, as a liberal, was accused of being a radical, he used to confound his critics with the phrase, "Let's look at the record"; and when the passage of time, or perhaps the march of ideas, made the former liberal a conservative, he announced with characteristic simplicity. "I think I'll take a walk." And it might be well if we would follow Al Smith's homely advice, and from time to time take a walk, having looked briefly at the record.

This first walk will not be on the sidewalks of New York because, in Peter Stuyvesant's time and for many years there-

after, there were none. Nevertheless it can be all around the town through which Peter Stuyvesant stumped—Knickerbocker New York while it was still Knickerbocker, before the British changed it.

In 1664 New Amsterdam was still more a dorp than a metropolis. Most conspicuous and most useless feature of the town was the fort which Minuit had started, van Twiller had (after a fashion) completed, and Kieft and Stuyvesant had been unable, owing to the company's penurious policy, to improve. It stood, as we have seen, where New York's ornate Custom House now stands, at the foot of Broadway, then known variously as the *Heere Straat* or *Breedeweg*. Inside the fort rose St. Nicholas Church, named appropriately after Santa Claus since it was built by Santa Claus Kieft, with the aid of the Dominie's inebriated guests, for the Rev. Evardus Bogardus. The belfry of this edifice was visible from all sides above the crude stone, wood, and mud walls of the stockade.

The Battery did not exist even as an auxiliary to the defenses of the obviously defenseless fort; and Battery Park, sometimes called by the English the Marine Parade, came much later with the filling in of the channel between Manhattan and the smaller island on which stood the curious structures known successively as Fort Clinton, Castle Garden, and the Aquarium.

The social center of the town was the egg-shaped plot opposite the fort, which we know as Bowling Green. Here children played by day, and lovers roamed by night; here dances and parades were held on festive days, and the cattle and hog fairs, rendered doubly popular by the rule that no one could be arrested for debt so long as a cow or hog remained unsold. Fair days were great days in the life of the little town; and it was on the Bowling Green at such times that the phlegmatic burgher and his *vrouw* dropped for a time the absorbing business of profiteering and spinning, and relapsed into the kind of jollity pictured by Jan Steen and Franz Hals.

Mrs. Booth, that indefatigable gatherer of Manhattan trivia, tells us in her admirable *History of the City of New York* that the correct feminine costume for these occasions "consisted of a short jacket of cloth or silk, and a number of short petticoats of every stuff and color, quilted in fanciful figures." In spite of the

fact that the same authority informs us that the Dutch damsels wore underneath these garments "blue, red, and green worsted stockings of their own knitting"—a fact which would seem to reduce the danger of masculine corruption to very nearly the vanishing point—Father Peter, if we can believe Washington Irving, worried a good deal about these petticoats, especially their length or lack of it.

New Amsterdam males on pleasure bent were petticoatless but undaunted. They wore long-waisted, ankle-length coats of taffeta, velvet, or plush, which concealed gaily colored waistcoats with wide, floppy revers, and several pairs of breeches—as many pants, in fact, as the girls had petticoats. Low-crowned beaver hats, ivory- or silver-headed canes, silver-hilted swords, and shoes with solid silver buttons or buckles completed the costumes, except on very important occasions when small swords with elaborate hilts were also worn.

On less festive occasions, when even the gayer dogs reverted to costumes of good substantial homespun and the artisans and laborers resumed their blouses and wide baggy breeches, the Bowling Green became a drill ground for soldiers from the fort, and the entire civic center took on a more workaday appearance.

To the west of the fort was the town windmill; to the north, the town pump and, in uncomfortably close juxtaposition, the town burial ground; and to the east, the town show place, the comfortable, hump-roofed mansion Peter Stuyvesant built in 1658, surrounded by gardens and garden paths, protected on the land side by a wooden fence with an arched gateway, and rounded on the water side to follow the contour of the shore. Just beyond were the town wharf and weighhouse and the storehouses of the Dutch West India Company; and staggering off to the east, roughly on a line with what is now the land side of the Battery, was the town's Main Street, called the *Perel Straat.*

The houses which fronted this earliest Manhattan roadway, which itself then fronted the harbor, were used by their owners for both business and residential purposes.

Today, three stout blocks of warehouses and the busy streets called Water, Front, and South, intervene between Pearl Street and the sea; but in 1664 it knew no confining influence and no guide except the irregular shore of the island before the filling-

in process began. Then as now, however, it wound and twisted like the canals of old Amsterdam, which leave the River Amstel as if they had said good-by forever, only to come back again—as Pearl Street was later to come back to Broadway—after completing a bewildering semicircle. At the time of our strolling only a small segment of the Pearl Street semicircle, the southeasterly one, was then complete, but it had already created that sardonic phrase often, and perhaps with reason, still applied to financial transactions on Manhattan Toe: "as straight as Pearl Street."

In one very important respect the New York of Peter Stuyvesant's time differed geographically from the New York of Al Smith's time. In 1664 there was no East Side, West Side; it was all East Side. Even Broadway, which followed, as it does now, a northerly line along the ridge in the middle of the island, was considered, except for a few residences at the lower end, a remote part of town; west of it, except for a cluster of country homes in what is now Greenwich Village, was the forest primeval. Next in importance to Pearl Street among the town's thoroughfares was the *Heere Gracht* or Broad Street, through the middle of which ran a very smelly ditch, which was none the less smelly because the Dutch deepened it and widened it and called it a canal.

All Dutch canals suffer from Dutch habits of cleanliness, since the busy housewife, intent on keeping her house speckless, sweeps everything out of it into the canal. The neat yellow and black brick houses which lined the *Heere Gracht*—their gabled ends toward the street, their brass knockers gleaming, and their high stoops adorned with big and little wooden shoes—were quite in the old Amsterdam tradition. So, too, were the fat little flat-bottomed boats in which pigs, cows, and humans all traveled in the same class. The humans, it is true, could occasionally come up for air, such as it was, but must always be prepared to scuttle back down with the cows and the pigs to avoid decapitation by the frequent low bridges. The *Heere Gracht* was navigable after this fashion from the lower entrance at the corner of Pearl, where Adriaen Block built the *Onrust,* as far north as Beaver Street, and visible in its original role of ditch all the way to "the Wall."

The latter was a stout structure of heavy wooden posts driven like piles into the solid ground and rising some twelve feet into

the air, with their upper ends uninvitingly pointed; against these palisades planks were nailed to a height of ten feet on either side and the interior filled with a rampart of sod. This wall, as we have seen, was of Stuyvesant's own contriving and had replaced the flimsy wooden fence which William Kieft had built to keep the hogs and goats which roamed the streets from escaping into the hinterland. On the town side of Kieft's fence there had been a narrow, unnamed road, and after the fence became a wall, the road naturally became Wall Street.

The thought intrudes, but should not be encouraged, that the real purpose of the original fence was not so much to keep the hogs and goats in Wall Street as to keep the bulls and bears out. The only incoming traffic, however, which the original Kieft fence was designed to obstruct was the premature return to their town residences, before milking time, of the local cows which were turned out each morning to graze in what is now City Hall Park. The purpose of the Stuyvesant wall, on the other hand, had no such peaceful aim: it was, as we already know, to keep New Englanders from coming to New York.

Picturesquely Dutch as Broad Street was, it was not so typical of life in New Amsterdam as Pearl Street itself. In fact seldom would a stroller in 1664 bother to journey so far north on Broad as Beaver Street, let alone the Wall, since most of the ground on either side was swampy and, even when drained by side canals, chiefly meadows. Rather he would continue along the Pearl Street shore to the gate in the Wall, and perhaps even through it to the rural regions beyond. Here he would find a small green valley and a brook and a path beside the brook, which rejoiced—under somewhat false pretenses, it is true—in the romantic name of *Maagde Paatie* or Maiden's Path. Preserved to posterity as Maiden Lane, it derived its name originally from the buxom washer-maidens who did their laundry work in the little brook and dried it in the sun on the neighboring hillsides. Where the tiny stream joined the sea, a smithy had set up a forge to catch the Long Island trade as it flowed southward into Pearl Street; and from him, the place derived the name of *Smit's Vallei,* which was shortened by the Dutch to *Vly* and corrupted by the English to Fly. Here later was the site of the famous Fly Market, one of the first of the many great produce markets of Manhattan.

Human habitations beyond the *Vly* were few and, for those days of slow transportation, far between. Along the river lay Dirck Vandercliff's farm or *bouwerie,* the location of which is more or less marked by the present Cliff Street. On this farm was the immortal hump later known as Golden Hill. Six million school children would now be reading in their history books that the American Revolution began there, if early New York had had as clever a public relations department as early Boston. Back of this farm was Shoemakers' Land, where tanners were permitted to ply their odoriferous trade until, near the end of the century, they were forced to take refuge in the Swamp. Beyond Golden Hill on the shore stood Isaac Allerton's tobacco storehouses, and a small mill; and between the storehouses and the mill was Peck Slip, where the ferryman named Harmanus van Borsum, at the sound of a horn, would man his trusty dory and row his passenger to a place called *Breukalen.*

That is about all there was to metropolitan New York in 1664, except a few houses scattered about between the main highways back of the Pearl Street fringe. Early comers who could afford to own their own homes were apparently free to choose their house lots at random and to erect their residences at whatever angles suited their fancy. Paths extending from the main roads to these carelessly placed edifices gradually became lanes, then roads, and are now the curious, designless network of cavernous streets which makes Manhattan Toe, even to the Manhattan-born, as baffling as the catacombs of Rome or that Xanadu of Kubla Khan, which also was said to be measureless to man. In Knickerbocker times this landscaping abandon was supposed to lend the town a certain piquancy. Well, we'll let it go at that, but unless we have urgent business or wish to become forever lost, we will not in 1664, and should not in 1946, attempt to thread the maze without both a compass and a beam.

These New Amsterdam houses, whether erected on the square or on a bias, were amazingly uniform in size and design. If stood side by side in orderly rows, they would have made an ideal modern-day own-your-own development in Astoria or Long Island City, with the added attractions of weathercocks atop the tiled roofs, window mirrors to apprise the knitting housewife of a neighbor's approaching visit, and front doors split waist-high to

New York Public Library

FRAUNCES' TAVERN, *CIRCA* 1780

New York Public Library

THE LONG ROOM, FRAUNCES' TAVERN

where Washington took leave of his officers, 1783

Courtesy of the Museum of the City of New York

FOUNDING THE NEW YORK STOCK EXCHANGE, 1792

(Miniature group by Ned J. Burns, photograph by Samuel H. Gottscho)

keep the babies from crawling out and to allow a listening ear above an outstretched neck to gather the latest gossip from the passers-by.

Carpets, even in the homes of the well to do, were almost unknown; sand, carefully—and sometimes artistically—swept into curving designs, covered the floors. Chairs were invariably stiff, high-backed affairs with no suspicion of rockers or yielding upholstery; the fancier ones were covered with leather secured by rows of shining brass nails. There were no stoves or ranges; but the entire family could crowd within the capacious chimney corners of the kitchen fireplace, and, at the risk of scorching pants and petticoats, it did. The parlor, chief glory of which was the guest bed, curtained and valanced and piled high with the family's linen, was used only on those rare occasions when Cousin Cornelis or Auntie Annetje made the long and arduous journey from Albany, or Fort Nassau as it was then called.

One of the few buildings in all New Amsterdam which did not conform to this rigid pattern was the tavern which Kieft had built to house the big hog-and-cattle men who came from Long Island and Jersey to join the festivities on Bowling Green, and which, in Stuyvesant's time, became the *Stadt Huys* or City Hall. Situated at the head of Coenties Slip—which still bisects both South and Front Streets and extends nearly to Water Street —it rose to the noble height of three stories, plus a steeply slanting roof and a lookout gallery at the top. It was, next to the fort, the town's most conspicuous structure. It might almost be described as the first skyscraper on Manhattan Toe.

Like all the other uncherished landmarks of the old Dutch town, the *Stadt Huys* fell under the ax at the end of the century when the English built a city hall of their own, afterward called Federal Hall, on Wall Street at the head of Broad; this structure, although it was the scene of the inauguration of the first President of the United States and contained priceless examples of the architectural genius of Pierre Charles L'Enfant, was allowed to suffer the same fate as the *Stadt Huys,* almost before the plaster was dry on the walls of Mayor O'Dwyer's office in the present lovely building with which the newly community-conscious American city was inspired to adorn the Fields.

New York is like that. Not that it is unaware of its own great-

ness. On occasions, when goaded by a holiday-minded Grover Whalen or a history-minded Robert Moses, it does handsomely by antiquity. But ungoaded, it forgets. The entire region through which we have been strolling is crowded with history, Dutch, English, and American. If it were in Boston, it would be tableted in bronze and heralded in song. People would stop you on the street to tell you what Oliver Wendell Holmes had to say about it. Boston, like Shakespeare, is "full of familiar quotations." The walls of Boston's houses are papered with historical documents; landmarks are as thick on Beacon Hill as tombstones in Westminster's poets' corner. But New York is different. It destroys itself. It tears down and tunnels under and builds high above its historic past.

"New York," said the Honorable James J. Walker, "is a nine-day town."

8

ENGLISH RULE ON MANHATTAN TOE STARTED OFF WELL. Richard Nicolls, who took over from peppery Peter—although his only preparation for the difficult role of colonial governor was as Groom of the Bedchamber of the Duke of York—proved to be a very good fellow.

He treated not only old Peter with justice and mercy, but to those lesser figures in the Dutch hierarchy who, like Mrs. Nicolaes Meyer, had put property above patriotism, Governor Nicolls gave the reward which they doubtless considered their just due: the continued enjoyment of that which they valued most; and to the laborers he granted that same degree of abasement and style of living to which they were accustomed. These beneficences were, of course, subject to new taxes imposed to enrich the treasury of his absent Grace, whose sole claim to both taxes and colony rested on the shadowy explorations of those pre-Back-Bay Cabots, John and Sebastian, and Charles II's characteristic generosity with other people's property.

How Nicolls managed to perform, at a distance of three thousand miles, his matutinal duties in the royal bedchamber we do not know, but he did a professional job of bedmaking for British rule in what was once—but, of course, no longer—New Amsterdam. He had promptly changed the name of the town on Manhattan Toe from Amsterdam to York, which was his sponsor's principal trade-mark; and he changed that of the more northerly

settlement, farther up on Henry Hudson's Northwest Passage, from Nassau to Albany, his sponsor's secondary trade-mark. Fort Amsterdam became Fort James. Father Peter's old town house hard by South Ferry was rechristened Whitehall.

In 1665 there were promulgated by His Grace's orders various high-sounding statutes known as "The Duke's Laws," which theoretically gave the colonists a nearer whiff of freedom than they had previously inhaled; although Nicolls recovered the privilege, which Stuyvesant had relinquished, of choosing the city fathers by appointment rather than having them chosen by election. This temporary setback to the cause of popular government caused murmurings but apparently no loud shouts of protest; and the fact that the gentleman who used to answer to the names of *schout, burgomaster,* and *schepen* now answer to those of sheriff, mayor, and alderman made little difference to the average citizen.

Nicolls' most delicate task and, with the twenty-year-old thunderings of Evardus Bogardus still echoing through the land, his greatest diplomatic achievement, was the bisecting of the colonial Sabbath, and more specifically the pulpit of St. Nicholas Church, into a Dutch Reformed morning and a Church of England afternoon. Otherwise life went on much as usual, except that taxes were paid in through a different window. And when, four years later, Nicolls resigned the governorship to take a soldier's risk and die a soldier's death on European battlegrounds, it was generally agreed that he had accomplished a thoroughly good job of conversion from Dutch to British rule.

His successor, Francis Lovelace, was an estimable person with young ideas. Observing that the *Hoogh Straat* bridge across the *Heere Gracht,* near what is now Exchange Place but was then Oyster Pasty Alley, had become the accepted place for consummating barter and trade, he established at that point the forerunner of New York's famous stock exchange. Noting also that it was his duty, "consonant to the commands of his sacred majesty, who strictly enjoins all his American subjects to enter into a close correspondency with each other," to do something about intercolonial communications, he sent to Governor Winthrop of Connecticut what he accurately described as "two rarities, a packet of the latest intelligence I could meet withal, and a post." This was indubitably the first delivery of U.S. mail.

His choice for postman Lovelace described to Governor Winthrop as being a person whom he conceived "most proper, being both active, stout, and indefatigable.... Each first Monday of the month he sets out from New York, and is to return within the month from Boston to us again.... Thus you see the scheme I have drawn to promote a happy correspondence."

This mail service began on New Year's Day in 1673, but a little more than seven months later, on August 8, it and other well-meant innovations introduced by Governor Lovelace came to an abrupt end. Holland and England were again at war, and momentarily in the Atlantic theater Holland was having the best of it. So, after a few futile poppings of the old fort's inadequate guns, Lovelace was forced, as Stuyvesant had been before him, to lower his flag before the superior potency of approaching enemy warships.

Nicolls and Lovelace, though not brilliant administrators, had been definitely on the asset side. The colony suffered by their passing. The former, in 1668, showed an enlightened viewpoint quite lacking in his confreres in the New England colonies by acquitting one Ralph Hall and his wife May "from any and all ... obligations ... upon any accusations or Indictment upon suspicion of Witch Craft." And the latter, with quite un-British willingness to learn the facts of life and face them, granted a divorce to Rebecka Levereddg, who complained, after several years of conjugal proximity to her husband Eleazer, she had "in all that tyme received no due benevolence from ye said Eleazer according to ye true intention of matrimony."

Captain Anthony Colve, the Dutch governor who now took over, was more concerned apparently with the material welfare of the colony than with its spiritual or connubial aspects. During his brief regime it was ordained in November 1673 that because "of the great ravages the Wolf commits on the small cattle... whoever shall exhibit a wolf which hath been shot on this Island ... shall be promptly paid therefore."

Like his immediate English predecessors, Colve was a man of commendable energy and ability; but he was under the mistaken impression that this time the Dutch were digging in for good on Manhattan Toe. So, after duly renaming the town New Orange and the fort Frederick William, he proceeded, with the royal

treasury behind him, to rebuild and rearm the town's defenses. But he had barely completed the mounting of the 190th of the 200 modern guns with which he proposed to implement the fort when news reached him in November 1674 that England and Holland had made peace on the basis of mutual restitution of all conquered territory. So Colve got the gate, and his British successor got the guns.

That successor, however, was not Francis Lovelace, for whom the break of the year before had come, as in Kieft's case, at a time when his personal affairs were sadly involved through too ambitious dabbling in Manhattan real estate. So the second rechristening and repainting job in fifteen months devolved on one Edmund Andros, who, whatever disadvantages he possessed when compared with Lovelace, had one advantage, almost essential in a successful governor, of not being in jail for debt.

Andros possessed one other excellent attribute which he shared with many of his countrymen: an acute British sense of smell, which led him to build a firm highway over the ditch in the middle of Broad Street which the Dutch had dignified by the name of canal. Thereafter, down to modern times, it has performed, well below the surface and well insulated for smell, its function as a sewer. Also he drove the tanners from Shoemakers' Land, forbade the throwing of garbage into the harbor waters, and arranged for its collection and carting away by official scavengers.

Whatever their motivation, aesthetic or altruistic, these measures were the first indications of any interest by responsible authorities in the physical welfare of the people on Manhattan Toe. The Dutch West India Company, in spite of its constitutional parsimony, had permitted ministers and schoolmasters to attend to the spiritual and mental needs of the community, and on occasion had reluctantly contributed to their support, but it would have no truck with doctors. *Zieckentroosters* or comforters of the sick, hang-overs from Job's time, were the only solace of ailing Manhattanites. Seventeenth-century medicos being what they were, perhaps the early Dutch fared quite as well with their *Zieckentroosters.* Perhaps, too, Andros and the other early British governors had an equally low opinion of the Aesculapii of their period. At any rate the practice of medicine

remained throughout most of the colonial period among the less-highly-thought-of professions.

The new governor encountered during his first month of service one of the first, if not the first, of countless disputes between capital and labor over the closed shop, when in December 1674 the corn and wine porters successfully protested against ordinary laborers being hired to replace them. Soon, however, Governor Andros became engrossed in what seemed at the time a much more important economic problem, the solution of which quite unexpectedly enabled this dashing major of dragoons to put his stamp—or, more accurately, his seal—on all the future history of Manhattan Toe.

By 1675 the wheat fields of the rich Hudson River Valley were already rivaling fur-bearing animals as sources of colonial wealth. "New York Flour," perhaps the earliest American trade-marked product, was becoming widely known in European markets and the West Indies for its excellent quality. Menacing this growing trade, however, was the fact that the farmers, who in most cases did their own milling, were unable to achieve that uniformity on which the sale of all trade-marked goods depends. Andros found a solution to this problem: he made it unlawful for anyone outside New York City to do any milling or exporting, and exercised a strict supervision of the local plants where the screening and grading—or "bolting," as it is called in the trade—was done.

This statute and various supporting ones were known as the Bolting Acts, and have been the subject of controversy between Leftists and Rightists ever since their passage. To the former they have appeared as autocratic, monopolistic measures concentrating industrial power in the hands of a favored few. To the latter the important point has been the fact that during the sixteen years before the Bolting Acts went down under the impact of repeated attacks by the "farm bloc," the population of New York City trebled, the number of its buildings increased from less than four hundred to nearly one thousand, and the number of its locally owned vessels grew from three ships, seven sloops, and eight small boats to sixty ships, sixty-two sloops, and forty small boats.

The most interesting point would seem to be that in this fight

between the "city slickers" and their rural neighbors over the Bolting Acts, we find one of the first evidences, perhaps *the* first evidence, of that political cleavage between town and country which has characterized and, to no small degree, shaped the entire history of the republic.

After 250 years it is still difficult to assess the qualities of Edmund Andros. He was a fast worker. In his first year he built out of stone a new city dock which extended all the way from Whitehall Slip to Coenties Slip and vastly facilitated the town's growing commerce. Subsequently he laid out Broadway—which was still for the most part nothing but the Indian trail Hudson had found on his arrival—into a street which extended beyond the wall and nearly to the Fields. He also sank several wells, and strove valiantly to make the still intemperate citizenry drink of their waters. Between these little stints he found time to cross into distant New Jersey and capture forcibly Governor Carteret.

This episode did not increase his political stature at home or abroad; neither did the rapid rise of smuggling and piracy, which was interpreted with some degree of justice as a direct result of the high tariffs he had imposed, but which was also due, as we shall see, to the continuing state throughout this period of total European war. Finally, in 1681, Andros was recalled.

He had been wrong, of course, in going over on the Jersey side and giving that troubled land a taste of what we in our times have sometimes called Jersey justice. He lacked understanding of the economic problems involved in the imposition of high and discriminatory tariffs. Yet, Andros did get things done. And he put up a strong defense of his administration when he got a chance to meet his Stuart hecklers face to face.

He had found New York, he told them, "poore, unsettled and without trade, except a few small coasters; hardly any went or came from beyond the seas," and he had left it "greatly increased in people, trade, buildings and other improvements . . . a market house (the only one in all those parts) . . . navigation increased at least ten times to what it was . . . and plenty of money (hardly seen there before)."

What more, he asked, did these Stuarts want?

Courtesy of the New-York Historical Society

FEDERAL HALL, 1797

(Made for *Valentine's Manual,* engraving by George Holland, colored lithograph by H. R. Robinson)

Courtesy of the New-York Historical Society

TONTINE COFFEE HOUSE, 1800

(From the painting by Francis Guy)

9

TRADE IN GOVERNORS WAS BRISK DURING THE EARLY YEARS OF British rule. Nicolls and Lovelace lasted four years each. Andros, with difficulty, eked out six. And Andros' successor, Brockholls, if he had not managed to do so many things wrong in the few months of his stewardship, would hardly have been glimpsed in passing. Then came one Dongan for five years in which he achieved, partly through merit and partly because of the ineptness of his predecessor, the reputation of being the best of the colonial governors of New York.

Like Peter Stuyvesant—whose name does keep popping up in this narrative, although most of these British governors, trained to the business of colonial rule, were technically superior to their Dutch predecessors—he had the good sense to cultivate the friendship of the Iroquois tribes and thus effect on the colony's northern exposure a second front against the always threatening and frequently warring French. But since his claim to greatness rests not on his foreign policies but on his domestic ones, it is on these that he must be judged.

That they were good policies there can be little question, but they did not originate with him or with his royal master. Dongan's predecessor, the regrettable Brockholls, had topped his other ineptnesses by committing the one sin unforgivable in a colonial governor: failure to collect the taxes for which colonies exist; and this oversight had reduced James Stuart, while still Duke

of York, to the point of offering his no longer productive American possessions at forced sale to the highest bidder. He was, in fact, restrained from completing the transaction at a ridiculous figure only by the shrewd counsel of William Penn, who advised that it would be better business to regrant to the dissatisfied colonists some degree of self-government in exchange for immediate reinstatement of the Stuart family's spending money. Dashed clever, these Quakers, in a nice, high-minded way!

That was the job Tom Dongan, an attractive young Irish blade who later became the Earl of Limerick, was sent over to do, and did do; and to him, instead of to Penn, went the credit—which is perhaps just as well, considering the many other points on which Philadelphians feel warranted in looking down long Quaker noses at their less godly brethren on Manhattan Toe. The colony's new bill of rights, which created a colonial regime consisting of a governor, ten councilors of the governor's choosing, and eighteen representatives of the local property holders, received the name of the Dongan Charter.

Like its predecessors, it bulged with high-sounding phrases. Among other things it proclaimed "that supreme legislative power should forever reside in the governor, council, and people, met in general assembly; that every freeholder and freeman might vote for representatives without restraint; that no freeman should suffer but by judgment of his peers, and that all trials should be by a jury of twelve men; that no tax should be assessed on any pretense whatever, but by the consent of the assembly; that no freeman or soldier should be quartered on the inhabitants against their will; that no martial law should exist; and that no person professing faith in God, by Jesus Christ, should at any time be in any way disquieted or questioned for any difference of opinion in matters of religion."

For these fine words, which were doubtless thrown off in all sincerity and with the hearty manner and linguistic fluency of his race (although they were never confirmed by slippery James, once the promised tax money had resumed its eastward flow), Tom of Limerick has won high praise from historians. But, though this gusty young Irisher was just about as good a governor as his royal master permitted him to be, it must be remembered that James was in the habit of issuing to his henchman such orders

as this: "Forasmuch as great inconveniences may arise by the liberty of printing... you are to provide that no person keep any press for printing; nor that any book, pamphlet or other matters whatsoever be printed without your especial leave or license." And so long as young Dongan was forced to run the errands of so narrow-minded an employer, his own liberalism, no matter how sincere, became, as a constructive force in molding history on Manhattan Toe, about as worthy of serious consideration as one of those ephemeral specimens of the rhymester's muse which share with the Earl himself the family name of Limerick.

James Stuart, once he had succeeded his brother on the throne, exhibited, as was to be expected, the traditional princely brand of gratitude toward his loyal servitor. Not only did he renege on the covenant which he had sent Tom Dongan across the Atlantic to make; but when he conceived of a neater scheme for extracting revenue from his Western Hemisphere possessions, a scheme which involved the uniting into one province the three News—New England, New York, and New Jersey—under one governorship, it was not Dongan but Edmund Andros, restored to favor and elevated to knighthood, who was chosen for this high command.

Sir Edmund came, saw, but did not conquer. The news of James Stuart's fall and the landing in Devonshire of his son-in-law, William of Orange, overtook James's new whipping boy soon after his landing in Boston to assume his august duties, with the inevitable result that Sir Edmund's next landing and, so far as this story goes, his final one, was in a New England jail.

There had been, it seems, a joker in the pack which was to constitute this King James version of a new deal: the charters of the New England and New Jersey colonies, which guaranteed to them a certain measure of self-government, and the New York one, which, though officially unratified, had been more or less in effect under the easygoing Dongan, were to go into the discard. To James this little card trick looked like a very simple matter. But to the hardy colonials it was—if we may change the figure—a turning back of the time clock of progress; and they simply refused to check in. The result in New York was a dress

rehearsal of the American Revolution, directed, as the mad Manhattan fates would have it, by a German with a Dutch wife.

Jacob Leisler, who has not received the billing he deserves in the great American show, was a leading merchant of the town, who, declining to recognize the authority of Nicholson, the holdover Stuart lieutenant governor, refused to pay the duty on a cargo of wine and, amid the plaudits of a majority of the populace, set himself up as governor ad interim until the new king, William of Orange, should be able to send a properly authorized official to succeed him.

Not by nature or training a revolutionist or a colonial administrator or, for that matter, an exponent of democratic principles of government, Leisler made many mistakes. He had himself empowered to open all mail and to question all strangers —two procedures not likely to enhance any man's popularity. He also risked precipitating a black market in meat by confiscating "for his Majesty's service" the city's supply of pork, and even went so far as to authorize a search of all "places where you Know suspects or hear of any to Be." And if free entry for this purpose was refused, his searchers were commanded to "use all manual force to Brake open."

In matters of foreign policy, also, he was no diplomat. Not content with Dongan's and Stuyvesant's wise policy of standing behind an Indian wall of defense against the predatory French, he quickly adopted offensive measures. For example, he commanded one William Masson, captain of the ineptly named ship *Blessed William,* "to sail for Quebec and assault, attack, and destroy as much as in you lies and . . . to destruction bring all . . . seize and make prize . . . as allso all frenchmen to Slay, Kill or Save Alive and to Injure them in what you possibly Can."

These incidents are recorded here so that what follows may not seem a defense of Jacob Leisler, the individual. To them must be added the accusation that, more than any other early ruler on Manhattan Toe, he fostered religious prejudice. Son of a Protestant clergyman who had been driven out of the Palatinate by the militantly Catholic French and himself a zealous convert to his wife's church, the Dutch Reformed, his hatred of Catholics was little short of fanatical. One reason why he refused to pay the duty on his cargo of wine, as he frankly stated at the time,

was that the collector of the port was a Roman Catholic, an appointee of the strongly Catholic house of Stuart.

For Jacob Leisler himself, therefore, on many grounds there is little to be said; but by the accident of his having been the first ruler of New York to derive his power, not from an autocratic government overseas but from the people of the colony itself, and also by the character of the opposition which this exercise of the public will aroused among the colony's rich and great, this man, whose very existence is unknown to most Americans, has as a symbol profoundly influenced all of our subsequent history.

It was this way.

Nicholson, Edmund Andros' deputy in New York, unable to get through for advice to his imprisoned chief, and not having either wit or will to decide things for himself, fled to England and left such authority as he assumed to possess with a trio of stout supporters of the Stuart regime: Stephanus van Cortlandt, the mayor; Nicholas Bayard, the head of the militia; and Frederick Phillipse, the richest man. These in turn received both spiritual and material aid from the upstate landgraves, Peter Schuyler and Robert Livingston. Leisler, on his side, formed what he called a Committee of Safety to advise him on his ad interim duties and in due course also convened what his admirers describe as a forerunner of the Continental Congress of a much later day.

There was, as could be expected, much conflict between the rival groups, especially over the possession of the revenues of the province; but Leisler, representing the majority party, was uniformly successful. Even the militia refused to obey Bayard and elected Leisler commander in chief. Whereupon the Bayard faction, removing their kid gloves, resorted to rioting in the streets, and Leisler, who was, as we have seen, for all his faults a forthright sort, retaliated by throwing Bayard and his friend Attorney General Nicolls in the jug.

William of Orange, who had been more or less informed of the deplorable state of civic affairs in his New York colony by the labored letters of Jacob Leisler, who never really mastered the English language, and more effectively by the epistles of the scholarly Livingston and van Cortlandt, and by the self-serving

reports of the meaching Nicholson, took a middle-of-the-road position by addressing a letter "to such as for the time being take care for preserving the peace and administering the laws of our said province of New York in America." (We can imagine how much the receipt of that epistle helped to "preserve the peace" between the rival factions claiming authority on Manhattan Toe!) And following up this apparently neutral policy, King William dispatched in 1690 a certain Colonel Henry Sloughter, who, in spite of his strictly British birth and name, was apparently a blood brother of the unlamented van Twiller, to take over the governorship and to inquire impartially "into the state of affairs in New York and to render a true and faithful account thereof."

Sloughter, a blunderer of almost Hudsonian proportions, turned up in Bermuda instead of New York—and as a result of this possibly premeditated mischance, another ship containing Sloughter's deputy, Captain Ingoldsby, arrived some weeks too soon.

Ingoldsby had no credentials, so Leisler, perhaps properly, refused to hand over to him the fort and the town. The newcomer, however, did have social connections, and they were not, as old Jacob soon discovered, on the Leisler side of the tracks. Nevertheless the governor ad interim reportedly treated the British boys courteously, quartered them in the City Hall, and did his best to restrain his men from wringing their necks. There were, however, a few clashes and a few shots and a few deaths, which didn't help Leisler's cause when Sloughter finally arrived after his Bermudian holiday, especially since Leisler's enemy, Mayor van Cortlandt, sailed down the harbor and was the first to get the Sloughter ear and tempt the Sloughter thirst both for liquor and money.

The result was that when Sloughter set foot on Manhattan Toe, supported, possibly literally, by Leisler's bitterest enemies, he made short work of unjugging Bayard and Nicolls and substituting for them old Jake and his son-in-law to be, young Jake Milborne.

What followed is the story of Bill Kieft and Evardus Bogardus in reverse. The liberated Bayard and his friends gave a great party for their savior, Sloughter, and succeeded without too much

effort in getting him disgustingly drunk. Bogardus got a church out of a similar debauch. Leisler and Milborne got the gallows out of this one. For when Sloughter's condition had very nearly reached insensibility, he signed, as Bogardus' befuddled guests had done, on the dotted line—or as the discreet Mrs. van Rensselaer politely puts it, "when his Excellency's reason was drowned in his cups, the entreaties of the company prevailed with him to sign the death warrant, and before he recovered his senses the prisoners were executed."

Obviously, the stubborn German had been wrong to set himself up as a substitute king, to open the mail, to confiscate the pork. Obviously, too, Bayard, Livingston, and Company were wrong to get Sloughter drunk and persuade him to sign a death warrant. But neither of these points is important now. The important thing is that between them they created a moment pregnant with history.

Long after Jacob Leisler's death his followers and his followers' sons constituted the Popular Party and were commonly referred to as Leislerians. Their opponents, led by the Bayards, van Cortlandts, Livingstons, Schuylers, and Phillipses, who fought Leisler's rise to power and finally consummated his fall—and their sons—constituted the Aristocratic Party.

They, not Thomas Jefferson and Alexander Hamilton, who lived their brilliant lives almost a century later, drew the two-party line between those who were rising and those who had risen.

10

FEW, EVEN AMONG NEW YORKERS, REALIZE THAT THAT PART OF Manhattan which was infested in the 1890's by robber barons was in the 1690's the world capital of organized piracy. Responsible for this prophetic phenomenon was one Fletcher who was governer of His Majesty's colony of New York from 1692 to 1698.

The reason Fletcher got in was that Sloughter got out the hard way by dying a drunkard's death. There were two bits of good news connected with that event: the death itself, which rid the Manhattan earth so speedily of one who was capable only of soiling it, and the fact that at long last there had arrived on Manhattan Toe a medico, Dr. Johannes Kerfbyle, a graduate of Leyden University, who was capable of performing, and did perform, the colony's first post-mortem.

Ingoldsby carried on as best he could until King William, a well-meaning man with a gift for picking the worst-meaning men to represent him, shipped over the creature Fletcher to bring order out of the chaos caused by these kaleidoscopic changes in administrations and administrative ideals. For such a task His Majesty could scarcely have found in all England a less suitable person.

Politically the Leisler rebellion had served its purpose. The new king had apparently accepted the principle that the colony should have representative government of a sort. He had instructed the

unworthy Sloughter to convene an assembly; and this is one of the few acts which was performed in accordance with royal plan. When Fletcher arrived, this assembly, although now controlled by the Aristocratic Party, was actively functioning; and the new governor made no important direct attempts to curb its powers. Instead, for purposes of personal enrichment, he allied himself in a business way with the landgraves and more important merchants in what amounted to a systematic plan for looting the province of its natural wealth and resources.

The scheme was so simple it could not fail; in fact, under similar circumstances it never has failed. The rich men of the province wanted to be richer. The chief source of riches then and for many years thereafter was possession of land. Fletcher, in his official capacity, had the right or assumed the right to grant that possession—for a price. Here then were the basic elements for a deal between corrupt business and corrupt politics, and the deal was made.

Anyone, apparently, who paid Governor Fletcher's price could have all the land he wanted, great tracts of outlying upstate acreage forty miles long and thirty miles wide, which carried with them almost feudal rights within the territories themselves and, in effect, self-perpetuating representation in, and bloc control of, the province's lawmaking assembly. In short, for bribes seldom larger than £100 and sometimes as small as £10, Benjamin Fletcher gave away to a favored few not only the colony's potential wealth but the colonists' hard-won political privileges.

Also, like many a more recent political scoundrel, Fletcher tried to cloak his chicanery in a mantle of sanctity by making large grants of potentially valuable land to ministers and churches. A man of loose morals himself, he nevertheless professed deep loyalty to the Church of England; and his generous gifts of other people's property were apparently accepted by the not too inquiring churchmen of the period as evidence of that fact.

Obviously, the concentration of so much of the province's land—and the voting power which went with it—in the hands of what was beginning to be known as the aristocracy reduced the great body of citizens to the status of disenfranchised tenant farmers. It is unlikely, however, that the Fletcher mentality was of a quality to foresee either the social or political significance of his acts. All

he cared about was money and protection from ecclesiastical condemnation. But the significance was there just the same: a mockery had been made of Leislerian democracy.

Benjamin Fletcher's dealings with the landgraves assume more than passing social significance in this story, because they constitute the third important development in American policy to emerge during the first hundred years of life on Manhattan Toe. The first was the beginning of the conflict between the city and the farm as shown in the controversy over the Bolting Acts; the second was the division of the electorate into a Popular and an Aristocratic Party during the Leisler regime; and the third is this first sign, under Fletcher, of a corrupt alliance between big business and bad politics. None of these factors has ever wholly disappeared. The third especially has remained a continually recurring phenomenon of politics in America's largest city.

But Fletcher was not content with local lootings, or perhaps he had exhausted their financial possibilities. He now turned to graft on a global scale. Which brings us to an economic development in the life of the community on Manhattan Toe quite as important as the political ones which we have been examining: the rise of the merchant class, as distinguished from the strictly agrarian, landowning class which had so far dominated the colony.

Fletcher's opportunity to profit from this new source of commercial wealth came from the fact that it was based to a large extent on the often dubious practice of privateering and the obviously illegal practice of piracy. Pirates needed protection. Merchants who dealt with pirates could afford to pay for protection. Fletcher was in a position to furnish protection.

First as to privateering. There have been some very distinguished privateers, notably George Cabot of Boston. Privateering was legal in time of war. Its dubious quality was not in many cases the fault of the privateer but of the government which commissioned him, as a measure of economy, to sally forth at his own expense and on a "no plunder, no pay" basis to prey upon the merchant ships of the country with which the privateer's own nation was at war.

So long as the privateer kept within the limits of his legal authorization and robbed only enemy ships, he needed no protection at home from Fletcher or anyone else. But since this restric-

tion kept the profits down, many privateers on both sides of every conflict made "mistakes" and attacked ships other than those of the enemy nation. Also, when peace came, as it occasionally did even in those days, the temptation was strong to stay in a business which had already proved highly profitable. Hence, many privateers became pirates, and looked about for a safe place to dump their illegally gotten gains.

That was where Fletcher came in. He had the harbor, one of the best in the world. He had the merchants, already rich and desiring to get richer, who could purchase the stolen cargoes. He had, too, the important advantages of three thousand miles of water-insulation against interference by European authorities. Presently, under these ideal conditions for the consummation of both maritime and political piracy, New York became the world rendezvous of one of the most picturesque bands of brigands that history has yet glimpsed.

Many of them were professional pirates of long standing—at least long for pirates whose stand is usually short—who posed as privateers to ease the public consciences of the wealthy New York merchants who equipped them with ships loaded with "goods suitable for pirates." The situation thus created was almost unbelievably bizarre. Not only did notorious pirates walk the streets of New York with impunity, but they were frequent guests at the town's most exclusive dinner parties and, complete with gem-encrusted daggers and heavy chains of Arabian gold, were the favorite dancing partners of the town's most exclusive belles.

As is so often the case when illegitimate trade becomes not only profitable but socially accepted, New York merchants, who were thus piling up fortunes which were to vie in later years with the no less illegitimately acquired properties of some of the landgraves, began to consider their participation in the profits of piracy a thoroughly respectable and praiseworthy business; and any threatened interference on the part of officials less open-minded or open-palmed than Benjamin Fletcher was a most reprehensible intrusion on their civil rights.

Helpful to this comforting point of view was a device, invented either by the more sensitive or the more ingenious among them, by which they did not engage directly in the shooting and drowning and robbing practiced by coarse souls like Hoar and Tew

and Evans and Wake and Coates and Thwaites. Instead, they limited their activities—and their responsibilities—to sending out from New York to Madagascar ships which were able to sell, at a substantial profit, their cargoes of "goods suitable for pirates" in exchange for cargoes of rich oriental wares which later appeared on the black-market counters of New York's most "respectable" stores. This was called, politely, engaging in the Red Sea trade—and on its profits many a New York fortune of the present day was founded or amazingly multiplied.

Perhaps the most active and successful operator in the Red Sea trade was the colony's richest man, Frederick Phillipse, né Vrederyck Felypsen, one of the trinity which caused the downfall of Jacob Leisler. This was the gentleman whose family seat on the banks of the Hudson, Phillipse Manor, has recently been restored at considerable expense by Mr. John D. Rockefeller. The Phillipses were known for generations along the Hudson as *Jonkheeren* or *Junkers,* and thus gave a name to a certain Westchester city and an answer to that time-honored musical comedy query, "What are Yonkers?" It always was, and still is, good for a laugh; and so, although it shouldn't be, is the time-honored profession of piracy.

It would be ennobling to report that a lofty public sentiment, like that which later propelled Seth Low and John Mitchel and Fiorello LaGuardia into temporary occupancy of City Hall, accomplished the downfall of Benjamin Fletcher, but what brought Fletcherism to its doom in 1698 was that the boys over in England weren't getting their "cut."

Fletcher, though admittedly enterprising and ingenious in his own behalf, was a man whose vision did not extend beyond the figures on his own bank statement. He did not seem to realize that the English King and his advisers would sooner or later begin wondering why His Majesty's colony of New York, obviously prosperous, was producing so meager a share of the royal income.

Fletcher would have been wiser, and so would his mercenary friends, the merchant élite, to have collected from the pirates the normal imposts, a paltry sum compared with their profits on these stolen cargoes, and forwarded them to King William to protect their franchise in Manhattan graft. But the only tariff Fletcher was interested in collecting was the one he collected for himself.

So the Governor, the merchants, and the strong-armed boys actively engaged in the Red Sea trade continued to play their dark aces close to their chests until William and his fellow feeders at the royal trough began asking, "What goes on?"

The king's action, when at last he glimpsed the situation, was even more bizarre than the situation itself. He promptly called a conference of Lord Chancellor Somers, the Duke of Shrewsbury, and the Earls of Romney, Oxford, and Bellomont, at which a collection was taken to finance a privateering expedition of his own, ostensibly planned to put an end for all time to the vile practice of piracy.

Only one detail remained to be settled: the choice of a commander of the expedition. Fortunately or not, one Livingston, of the well-known New York and Albany Livingstons, was on a visit to London; so his advice was sought and taken. The man he recommended was a native of Greenock, Scotland, who had long commanded a ship trading between London and New York, and who lived at what is now 56 Wall Street and bore an unblemished reputation as an experienced and courageous mariner. His name was Kidd—Captain Kidd, *the* Captain Kidd.

11

THERE WAS SOMETHING FISHY FROM THE VERY BEGINNING about the Kidd case. That the King of England and his friends should have hoped to put an end to the flourishing Red Sea trade by outfitting one vessel of 287 tons and 34 guns, the *Adventure Galley,* is too incredible. That two persons with hands so deep in the royal money bins as His Majesty and the Lord Chancellor should have been forced to take up a private collection to finance so insignificant a venture smells more like the Winter Garden than like Whitehall. And finally, that they should have picked as commander in chief of their enterprise a colonial whom they had never seen before, on the recommendation of another colonial whom they couldn't have known very well, instead of one of their own trusty British sea dogs whom they knew all about—that isn't even good soap opera.

It wasn't as if William Kidd were "one of the boys." If he had been a former pirate turned stool pigeon, there might have been some reason for their choice and also for their reluctance to back him openly with the public moneys. If he had even been a veteran Red Sea trader who knew the pirates' haunts, he might have qualified for the job; but except for a period of officially authorized privateering during the war with France, Kidd had operated exclusively as a commercial mariner on the Atlantic lanes. He had had no truck, socially or in a business way, with marauders like Thomas Tew, John Ireland, William Mace, John

Avery, and Thomas Wake, who, when they heard of his new role, sat with their rough fellows and rougher girls in the Dark Ship Tavern down by the East River and sang derisive songs about the good captain and what they termed his kid-glove expedition against them. He, himself, when in port, had lived quietly with the former widow, a woman of some property, whom he had married rather late in life, and was known as a solid citizen—as King William described him in his royal commission, "our trusty and well-beloved Captain." In short, except for his excellent reputation, which is an asset in an applicant for any job, William Kidd had hardly any recognizable qualifications for the post to which he was appointed.

This he proceeded to prove by sailing the pirate-infested seas for upward of a year without finding any pirates, a performance which made him highly unpopular with his crew, which had taken ship on the old "no plunder, no pay" basis (another suspicious factor in a royally sponsored expedition). According to Kidd's story, when he allowed a richly laden Dutch ship to go free because its papers were in order, a member of the ensemble, a direct-actionist named Moore, protested so violently that the estimable Kidd, trying to convert him to law and order by smashing him over the head with a bucket, killed him. This apparently well-intentioned act later became the basis of murder charges against "our trusty and well-beloved Captain."

What happened after that, whether Kidd voluntarily became "nearsighted" like other privateers turned pirates, or whether, as he subsequently claimed, he was forced by a mutinous crew to commit various acts of piratical depredation, we shall probably never know. The record of his subsequent trial—which was destined to live in infamy with the Dreyfus and Thaw travesties of a later day—has been carefully preserved, but proves only one thing: that it was about as free from political guile as our own Congressional Record during an election year. It seems clear, however, that William Kidd did commit said acts of depredation, that they were immensely profitable, and that with the loot thereof he set sail, not for England, but for the Atlantic's western shore.

Whose embarrassment was the more acute—his own or the Earl's—we shall also never know, when on his arrival he dis-

covered that in his absence Lord Bellomont, one of his fellow stockholders in the *Adventure Galley* syndicate, had succeeded the more hospitable Fletcher as governor of New York.

Things hadn't been going well back in London, either. Mary, always the more popular member of the firm of William and Mary, had died in 1694, and from that time on it seemed as if King William couldn't do anything right. The silly Kidd affair was a typical sample of the royal wisdom. He had had tax trouble, too, and was continually on the losing end of fights with Parliament. The loyalty of Shrewsbury and some of his other intimates had come under suspicion. Kidd's defection, coming on top of these graver matters, was in itself a small affair, but as has been suggested, it smelled fishy. The King of England in the piracy business! That would never do. So William turned to Bellomont, the only demonstrably honest member of the syndicate, and commissioned him as governor of both New York and Massachusetts, with special instructions to clean up the piracy mess and, if that double-crossing villain, William Kidd, turned up, to bring him back dead or alive.

At the moment of Kidd's arrival in New York, the governor was attending to his Boston chores. This fact gave "our trusty and well-beloved Captain" a chance to ponder the bad news of Bellomont's presence on the wrong side of the Atlantic, and to settle upon a plan of action. Apparently, he decided to see His Lordship and make the best deal he could for himself, but only after he had safely hidden the proceeds of his Red Sea piracy. The spot he chose, according to the official story, was that same Gardiner's Island in New York Bay, which has previously figured in this story; and in a spot of low ground on the island there still stands a granite marker with an inscription which, if true, would dispose forever of the mystery of the pirate's buried gold. It reads: "Cap. Kidd's treasure was buried in this hollow and recovered, 1699."

There are several versions of the Captain's brief stay on the island. One was that he was hospitably treated by the Gardiner then in residence and that he in return presented Mrs. Gardiner with a cloth of gold and a huge diamond dropped playfully in a water bucket. A more sanguinary tale avers that Captain Kidd

and his men came in the night and cut the old gentleman's hands in the dark with their cutlasses.

Well, Lord Bellomont had his orders and carried them out. Declining to dicker on his own behalf or on behalf of the syndicate for a proffered share of the pirate's loot, he promptly seized the returning mariner on his arrival in Boston Harbor and transferred him to a ship bound for England, where, as all the world knows, he was tried at the Old Bailey and hanged much higher than Haman at Execution Dock.

The present writer is not qualified to pass on the legal aspects of the Kidd case, but he suspects that a really good civil liberties lawyer would have had little trouble in proving that the formerly trusty and well-beloved Captain William, whatever his personal delinquencies may have been and wherever the blame for them may have lain as between him and his royal and noble sponsors, was thrown to the political dogs to keep those dogs from devouring what was left of the waning fortunes of the House of Orange.

The one good which grew out of the *affaire Kidd* was the sending to America of Lord Bellomont, who, in spite of his earlier connection with the questionable syndicate transactions of his royal master, promptly proved himself an honest and capable colonial administrator. Shocked by Fletcher's unabashed trafficking in the public domain, which he characterized in his reports to the Lords of Trade as "the most impudent villainy I ever heard or read of any man," he succeeded in voiding some of the more obviously fraudulent grants to the landgraves and clergy and recommended measures to the home government, which, if they had been adopted, would have altered for many generations the social and financial history of New York. As it was, he did all that any honorable man in his position could have done, without, however, shaking the iron grip of the few on what was rightfully the property of the many.

The capture of Captain Kidd was but one of many incidents of his successful campaign against the pirates. He stationed warships off Sandy Hook to prevent the entrance of vessels containing contraband material and gave clearance to outgoing ships only on the posting of a bond not to call at Madagascar or other pirate haunts. It would be too much to say that Governor Bellomont rid the sea of pirates; for another hundred years or more they con-

tinued to ply their trade; but he did reduce to a minimum the number whose operations were based on New York; and never again was the community on Manhattan Toe to become what Benjamin Fletcher had made it: the world capital of piracy.

Although the first Englishman of the inner court circle to govern the colony, Lord Bellomont was also the first to range himself definitely on the side of the Popular or Leislerian Party. He dismissed several influential officials and members of his council, all members of the Aristocratic Party, who were known to have participated in Fletcher's dealings with pirates on land and sea, and replaced them with Leislerians. He saw to it that all the acts of Jacob Leisler as ad interim governor were accepted and approved by Parliament and that the latter's property and that of his son-in-law to be, Jacob Milborne, was restored to their heirs. He also built the town a new city hall, afterward Federal Hall, at the corner of Nassau and Wall, and until his death in 1701 gave the community a vigorous, honest, and liberal administration.

One of Bellomont's strongest points had been his ability to keep his Leislerian supporters from getting out of hand. Lieutenant Governor Nanfan, who carried on after Bellomont until a new royal appointee should arrive, did not have that gift. Still smarting under the beating they had taken in Sloughter's time at the instance of old Jacob's aristocratic foes, the Popular Party, which was now in a majority both in the council and assembly, threw the high and mighty Robert Livingson out of his fat job as collector of customs, declared him a defaulter, expelled him from the council, and confiscated his not inconsiderable supply of worldly goods. As for Nicholas Bayard, who ten years before had secured the act under which Leisler and Milborne had been executed, all they did to him was to drag him before a packed court which sentenced him and one Hutchings, an alderman, to be disemboweled and quartered.

Meanwhile, King William himself had died and been succeeded by that Queen Anne whose reign was distinguished by the military triumphs of Winston Churchill's paternal ancestor, the first Duke of Marlborough, and the literary triumphs of Pope, Swift, Addison, Defoe, and Congreve, but who is known to moderns chiefly by the housing atrocities which bear her name. In 1702,

however, Anne's worst gift to cultural and social progress in America was her cousin Edward, whom she dispatched to New York ostensibly to succeed the excellent Bellomont and the well-meaning Nanfan, but actually, so it was said, to get him out of her royal sight.

The impulse is understandable. Besides having most of the moral delinquencies of van Twiller and the political ones of Fletcher, Cousin Edward possessed one or two little ways of his own which would have made him repugnant to any self-respecting man or woman. In the late afternoon of the day of his arrival he gave a preview of one of them by painting and powdering his face, donning the elaborate feminine habiliments of a lady of the Court, and prancing and flouncing along the parapets of the fort in full view of the welcoming throngs. Once, when he felt especially playful, he paraded up the Broad Way in this costume until dragged forcibly back to the fort by the troops he was supposed to command. Outspoken Lewis Morris complained loudly of "his [the Governor's] dressing in women's clothes every day and putting a stop to all public business while he is pleasing himself with that peculiar and detestable magot."

Lady Cornbury, in addition to conceiving eight children during the period of her conjugal relations with this unusual man, also possessed certain behavior characteristics of her own which make her outstanding in the annals of governors' ladies. Whenever, on her frequent visits to the homes of the wealthier citizens, she saw a dress or an ornament or a piece of furniture which she admired, she asked if she might borrow it. Being the boss's wife, so to speak, she well knew that her hostess could neither refuse the loan nor request its return.

If the Cornburys had confined themselves to charades and minor peculations, their six years' occupation of Whitehall, though unpleasant and on occasion difficult for the more conservative colonists, might have been bearable. But like so many weak men, Cornbury seemed bent on playing a strong hand in all the affairs of his neighbors. His first act was to restore Mr. Livingston to his properties and Mr. Bayard to his bowels, the latter and those of the alderman not having as yet been other than legally removed. This, perhaps, was only fair, since the Leislerians, by their revengeful excesses after Bellomont's restraining hand was

removed, had laid themselves open to attack. The sad part of the situation was Cornbury's denouncing of all Leislerians, good or bad, and all their works, good or bad. In short, this man of pygmy mind and morals managed to undo within a few months of his arrival most of the progress made under the honest and intelligent Bellomont, and to set the civic clock back again to about where it had been at the end of Fletcher's deplorable reign.

Cornbury was continually in need of funds, and did not hesitate to grab them from the public bag or to profit, as Fletcher had done, by an occasional handout from favor-seeking landowners. These diversions from the straight and narrow he strove to cover, as other governors had done, by an apparently fanatical devotion to a chosen sect: in Cornbury's case, the Church of England. Presbyterians were his especial bêtes noires. He confiscated the church property of one Presbyterian congregation for the benefit of rival Episcopalians and threw two preachers of the same faith into jail for daring to preach without a license from the governor. Resentment over this act not only resulted in speedy acquittal for these specific men of God, but settled, theoretically at least, for all time the legality of religious liberty in the province of New York.

That there was wide divergence between the theory and practice of freedom of worship in the still young community was, perhaps, to be expected. After the court decision in the Cornbury case, all Protestant churches came into immediate enjoyment of the privileges it granted. Jewish worship likewise received the community's blessing. Roman Catholics, however, for many decades to come were refused the right to organize into parishes and conduct public services according to their established ritual.

And why was the Church of Rome, long a dominant factor in the temporal as well as the spiritual life of the world, singled out for ostracism? In the question lies the answer. The Church of Rome *had* exercised temporal power in most of the countries from which the colonists came; and in many cases within their memories, through kings and queens who professed that faith, the Church had exercised it with the severity and cruelty typical of the rulers of that day. That Protestant rulers, when they got the opportunity, often exercised severity and cruelty in their treatment of Catholics did not make the same impression on

the American colonists, because in their experience it had not happened so often.

When it did happen between Protestant and Protestant, as in the Cornbury case, the injustice was evident enough and immediately condemned. Therefore, in spite, of the glaring unfairness of the colonists' attitude toward Roman Catholic worship and the farce which it made of their boasted liberalism, they were actually groping toward a complete freedom of worship.

Although Cornbury's efforts to camouflage his iniquities by zeal against the Presbyterians failed utterly, his zeal in behalf of the Episcopalians was eminently successful when he persuaded his cousin Anne to bestow on "a small square edifice with a tall spire," built in 1697 at the head of Wall Street, a tract of land called the Queen's Farm, which included a good part of the territory between Broadway and the North River from Fulton Street on the south to well above Spring Street on the north. This was apparently an open and aboveboard transaction in the sense that no money bribe passed from cleric to politico, but it was quite as effective as any of Fletcher's grants had been in placing a large share of what turned out to be some of the most valuable real estate in the world in the hands of a favored few. But the Trinity grant, or "Trinity grab," as it is sometimes called by the unchurchly, was destined to be the last act of a British-sent governor to affect permanently the future of the now rapidly changing community on Manhattan Toe.

By 1708, when Cornbury was recalled by a queen who could no longer resist the colony's persistent protests, there were signs that New York was outgrowing its British governors—was, in fact, outgrowing British rule.

12

THERE OUGHT TO BE A GOOD DEAL TO SEE AROUND A TOWN when one century ends and another begins. It is the traditional full stop in historical narrative. And since the reader has been informed that this story of Manhattan Toe is to be told by a sort of antiphonal process of looking at the record and taking a walk, the year 1700 would seem to be the obvious time to get out and walk.

However, the effort would be hardly worth while if all we were interested in was the physical appearance of the town, for the early English governors, both good and bad, were so absorbed in the immediate political and economic problems of the colony that they did little in these first years, either aesthetically or practically, to alter it from the old Dutch town which they had inherited from their Knickerbocker predecessors. With the exception of the landed proprietors and their vassals—the slaves, bond servants, and tenant farmers—British-ruled New Yorkers huddled behind the city's now theoretical Wall Street boundary line much as Dutch-ruled New Amsterdam had done.

Some of the crisscross streets of lower Manhattan, which had been little more than paths in Stuyvesant's time, were, however, taking more conventional form and were also taking the names by which they are still known. The genesis of most of these names is not hard to trace. New Street was New Street because it was the first thoroughfare opened by the English. Division Street was the

dividing line between the farms of James De Lancey and Henry Rutgers. Ann Street was such because it was a habit of Manhattan farmers to name lanes on their estates after their wives. Stone Street, which could not have created a greater sensation in its day if it had been paved with gold, was so called because it was the first street on Manhattan Toe to be paved at all. About Jacob Street there is some confusion: the academically inclined have sought to give eponymous credit to that biblical Jacob who was, as the devout reader will recall, more interested in ladders than in streets; the weight of evidence, however, seems to favor the theory that Jacob Street, like the other primitive thoroughfares on Manhattan Toe, owed its name not to heavenly inspiration but to an origin as earthy as its own muddy surface—either Jacob Leisler or Jacobus Roosevelt.

Which is a reminder that, through the years since Claes van Rosenvelt's arrival in 1644, Roosevelt genealogy had been marching steadily on. In 1658 Claes's fat wife Jannetje gave birth to a son who was to become the great-great-great-great-grandfather of Theodore and Franklin Roosevelt. This man-child was christened Nicholas and, so we are told by the Roosevelt family biographer, Mr. Bellamy Partridge, "wore knickerbockers and wooden shoes and learned to bowl on the green at the foot of Broadway." Later, having reached a less frivolous age, Nicholas emigrated to a place cursed with the name of Esopus, where he did well at fur trading with the Indians, and further showed his sense by returning with such posthaste as the transportation facilities of the period afforded to *Manahachtanienk,* the place where we all got drunk. There he opened a dry goods store, and started he knew not what by becoming the first Roosevelt to enter politics. He was an alderman and—this may or may not be presageful—served several terms. His wife, the former Heiltje Kunst, bore him nine children—one of whom, Johannes, begat Jacobus, who begat Jacobus, who begat Cornelius, who begat Theodore, who begat Theodore, 26th president of the United States; and another, Jacobus, begat Isaac, who begat James, who begat Isaac, who begat James, who begat Franklin, 32nd president of the United States. The change from van Rosenvelt, an authentic Dutch name, to Roosevelt seems to have occurred in Father Nicholas' time.

The Battery in 1700 was little more than its name implied,

an auxiliary row of guns which the British had installed to protect the fort against the threat of marauding French; and the cluster of nine streets radiating from it—South, Front, Pearl, Stone, Whitehall, Broadway, Greenwich, Washington, and West—were not all so clearly defined as now, but they were beginning to give a recognizable pattern to the Manhattan scene. In fact, if we compare New York in 1700 with the Duke's Plan of New Amsterdam in 1664, which some Rand or McNally of the period prepared to show James Stuart what *in absentia* he had acquired, the chief difference we should observe would be the fact that the town was assuming something of the "East Side, West Side" character thereafter celebrated in song and story. Broadway was no longer out where the West began. The wilderness between it and the Hudson had been partly cut down and partly built up.

A secondary landscaping feature to catch the eye would be the fact that the territory as far north as Maiden Lane, where it had not been hopelessly messed up by the early irregular streets, had been laid out roughly in squares and rectangles resembling the dull array of indistinguishable, waffle-like blocks which still gives an unexciting uniformity to the upper reaches of the modern city.

It is not to be supposed that this dawning orderliness gave a really metropolitan air to the town. Charles Wooley, a graduate of Cambridge University, who spent two years in New York beginning in 1678, described it as "poore, scanty in population; its buildings mostly wood; some few of stone and brick." Realization of the town's architectural shortcomings must have come home to the inhabitants themselves, since we read of an act empowering the government "to make such rules and orders for the better regulation, uniformity and gracefulness of such new buildings as shall be erected for habitations." This was probably the community's first attempt at a zoning law.

More revealing even than his description of the shabbiness of the town was the young Englishman's account of a sporting event "in an orchard of Mr. John Robinson's of New York, where we followed a Bear from Tree to Tree upon which he could swarm like a Cat; and when he got to his resting place upon a high branch, we dispatch'd a youth after him with a Club to an opposite bough who, knocking his Claws, he comes grumbling

down backwards with a thump upon the ground, so we after him again." This bear hunt is believed to have occurred on Pearl Street between Wall and Pine—which gives an idea of the metropolitan character of the New York of the late seventeenth century.

By night not only bears but human beasts of prey were reasonably free to roam the streets, since an economy administration decreed that "lights be put out in the dark of the moon." If, on nights when the moon was supposed to be substituting for the lamps, clouds happened to come between the celestial body and the terrestrial one, nothing could be done about it. To offset this invitation to transgressors, which compares oddly with the 119,546 street lamps which now illumine and protect the night city, the British governors "required all able-bodied citizens to keep watch by turns, and punished a disregard of this duty by a fine. These citizens were required to provide themselves with good muskets and six rounds of ammunition." In 1697 a regular watch of "four good and honest citizens" was appointed to patrol the streets by night, and the following year Marshal Enoch Hill became the city's first uniformed police official. Five years previously, under "An Act for the Encouraging of a Post Office," Andrew Hamilton had been appointed "to governe and manage the said general Post Office."

Law and order were also extending in a mild way to neighboring Long Island, as revealed by this entry in the early records of that region: "To the Worshipful Cort of Sessions nowe sitting at Gravesende, June 21, 1683: these maye certiffie thatt inn obedience too an order ffrom sayde Cort and bye consente of bothe townes of Breucklyn and Ffackbush, too run the lyne twixt the sayde townes. . . . have done and markt the trees twixt towne and towne, as witness our hands the days and years above written." Another suburban community, Richmond, on Staten Island, first appeared in the 1700 news of the day as Coccles Town, named after the cockleshells abounding in the neighboring Fresh Kills.

Capital and labor were putting on a few tentative colonial previews of events still to come. In 1680 the master coopers had organized what has been described as the first trust in American history; object: to raise the price of casks. In 1684 the municipal carters had struck for higher wages and were promptly "Sus-

pended and Discharged from being any longer Carmen." Mostly, however, industry and commerce stuck to the time-hallowed relationship of master and man. Slavery, which had been introduced by the Dutch, continued under the English, as did the practice of bonding laborers for long periods in return for food and lodging. A typical case is that of a ten-year-old boy, bound for nine years to a cooper, on condition that he "will truly serve the commandments of his master Lawful, shall do no hurt to his master, nor waste nor purloin his goods, nor lend them to anybody at Dice, or other unlawful game, shall not contract matrimony, nor frequent taverns, shall not absent himself from his master's service day or night." For faithful performance of these duties and abstentions the boy was to receive instruction in the art of coopering together with "apparell, meat, drink and bedding," and, at the end of his nine years, "two good suits of wearing apparell from head to foot."

Social strata in the colony were not clearly defined; in fact, except as between the free and the unfree, were practically nonexistent. The Morris' were the only family to pretend to social leadership on the old-country basis of not being engaged in trade. The Brevoorts and Goelets were ironmongers. The Schermerhorns were ship chandlers. Gerard and Nicholas de Peyster were merchants. The Verplancks, Baches, and Franklins were traders and shippers. The Gouverneurs dealt in West Indian goods; the Schuylers, in European and East Indian. The Bayards, Livingstons, van Cortlandts, and Rhinelanders were in the sugar-refining business. So were the Roosevelts, except Nicholas, who, along with the Beekmans, van Zandts, and Buchanans, deviated into dry goods.

Apparently none of these industrious gentlemen regretted having something to do. Only the Morris', who didn't, seemed unhappy. In fact their attitude toward most of their fellow citizens can be described by no other adjective but snooty. "As New England, excepting some Families," wrote Lewis of the breed, "was ye scum of ye Old, so the greatest part of the English in the Province [of New York] were ye scum of ye New." But whatever the Morris' thought of their neighbors, the neighbors thought well of themselves. The airs assumed by the pirate-enriched merchants on Manhattan Toe were said to be even

airier than those of the landgraves. In fact, as one socially conscious but discerning observer has well remarked, not since the Norman Conquest had climbers enjoyed such a magnificent opportunity.

If we can believe all that the *Almanacs* tell us—and I wouldn't put it beyond them to do a little good-natured spoofing—"the gentleman of fashion in 1690 . . . didn't lack clothes. His required apparel included green silk breeches fluted with silver and gold, blue cloth stuff and frieze coat, lace shirt, scarlet and blue hose, lacky hat, old bob wigs and periwigs, gun and pair of pistols, silver-hilted sword, silver spoon and fork, and shot-bob." Thus arrayed, he might betake himself to one of the town's many alehouses or, if of a really venturesome spirit, journey so far as The Blue Boar, believed to be one of the first suburban taverns in the Western Hemisphere. The "suburb" it adorned was located four blocks above Wall Street approximately at the present juncture of Broadway, Maiden Lane, and Cortlandt Street. Here, like as not, he would abandon himself to what Alexander Mackraby, writing in 1678 to a friend in England, described as "a vile practice, which is peculiar to the city; I mean that of playing backgammon, which is going forward in the public houses from morning till night, frequently a dozen tables at a time."

The more romantically inclined went to Brooklyn, where, we are reliably informed, a tree grew, a famous tulip tree, near the ferry, under whose leafy branches a good time was had by many Manhattanites. Also we learn that, still farther away, Long Islanders "rushed violently into the fields" to pick strawberries.

Obviously life in His Majesty's colony of New York was getting on. The British, with their spirit lamps, their umbrellas, and their mackintoshes—which I am sure they must have had, or a reasonable facsimile thereof, although there is no record of same—and their addiction to week-end holidays, had not been able to resist the temptation to go on picnics into the abutting hinterland. And as a result conservative Manhattanites, judging by their venturesome attitude toward The Blue Boar and Brooklyn, were discovering that geography, even romance, existed above and beyond the line of the wall which had served in Stuyvesant's time to keep out New Englanders and cows.

13

UP TO NOW, ALTHOUGH THE READER MAY NOT HAVE NOTICED it, the author has made an effort to present the history of New York in the form of conventional—well, not too conventional—narrative. For convenience, the growth of the village from no white inhabitants in 1609 to nearly five thousand in 1709 has been traced in a pattern created to a large extent by the varying personalities and fortunes of its Dutch directors and English governors. There was, it seemed, no other way. The town marched forward with Minuit, backward with van Twiller; forward with Leisler, backward with Sloughter. Flowed might be a truer term than marched, since underneath this superficial pattern of men and moods, which might be compared to the locks of a canal, there flowed a stream which, although alternately checked and released, found its way after the manner of all good streams to the sea.

Call it the stream of progress, if you will. Or the stream of free will. Or the stream of Americanism, if you feel that the polyglot mass on Manhattan Toe had jelled sufficiently to justify that name. To this observer this stream seems definitely to have reached "the sea, the blue, the fresh, the ever free," during the days of the prancing and peculating Cornburys. For Cousin Edward, although he managed to play hob for a time with a few recalcitrant Presbyterians and enriched, beyond the dreams of parsons before or since, a few ascendant Episcopalians, had

nothing to show in the end for his bigotry but the legal establishment by the people's will of religious freedom in the province of New York. And although he was the cousin of the Queen of England, he was returned by the will of that same people to his reluctant relative, as deflated as a defeated candidate for the Presidency on the first Wednesday after the first Monday in November.

After sitting at the childbirth of American independence, nearly three-quarters of a century before Mr. Jefferson's official announcement of its birth, we can come to but one conclusion: from now on in this story governors are out, events are in. And events, in the half-century following New York's virtual declaration of independence, came so fast that if we were to follow the near-conventional narrative method so far used, the patience of the reader would be exhausted before we reached those pre-Revolutionary, Revolutionary, and post-Revolutionary years, which, to be understood at all, require at least as leisurely consideration as we have given the Dutch and early English periods.

So, to give the reader a chance to stand up and stretch, the author will try to give a brief inning by inning résumé of some of the hits and runs and errors scored on Manhattan Toe between 1709 and 1759, which was, you will observe, about the time when the starting pitchers for the 1776 world series really began to warm up.

1709: Religious liberty, yes, but not religious peace had come to Manhattan Toe. For in this year a certain Mr. Freeman and a certain Mr. Antonides were ordered to alternate in preaching in King's County churches and "divide all ye Profitts Equally" and avoid all further disputes—a precaution doubtless well taken in view of the "shameless disturbance" which had occurred two years before when the Rev. Mr. Barton and the Rev. Mr. Hobbart undertook to preach simultaneously at a church in Jamaica, Long Island.

1710: "This is the finest air to live upon in the universe," wrote Robert Hunter to his friend, Dean Swift, "and if our trees and birds could speak, and our assemblymen be silent, the finest conversation also."

1710: Conversation among Manhattan lawyers was already acquiring that brevity and clarity with which we of this generation of bewildered clients are familiar, as witnessed by this 1710 deed which assured the purchaser of property that he should "Quietly and Peaceably Have and Injoy ffull and ffree Liberty ... with ffree Ingress Egress and Regress ... without any manner of Lett Suite Trouble vexation Eviction Disturbance or molestation." In short, it was his.

1711: Even under Popular Party rule progress was not always forward: New Yorkers set up at the foot of Wall Street the town's first slave market.

1712: New York's white population, living in continual dread of an uprising of the rapidly increasing black population, experienced its first race riot. Twenty-one Negroes were executed; six others died by their own hands.

1712: Parents, who had been rather put down by youth-loving Peter Stuyvesant, had regained the upper hand. "If any Child or Children," quoth the law, "above sixteen years of age, and of Sufficient understanding, shall smite their Natural Father or Mother, unless provoked and forct for their selfe preservation from Death or Mayming, at the Complaint of said Father or Mother, and not otherwise, they being sufficient witness thereof, that Child or those Children so offending shall be put to Death."

1715: In the years between 1715 and the Revolution New York merchants and shipowners went into the slave traffic in a big way. Although many of "our very best people" were so engaged, conditions on board the slave ships and in the treatment of their cargoes on arrival were so bad that the authors of *A Maritime History of New York* estimate "that, in transit and during the 'seasoning' period, the death rate among slaves 'sardined' into this country averaged as high as fifty per cent."

1720: In this year the Jay family bought a lot with a frontage of 15 feet on Broad Street and a sideage of 94.6 feet on Stone Street. They still own it.

1722: The city fathers, having heard that there was "*aut* Contagious Distemper on Board" a vessel arriving from Holland,

made a beginning of what we now know as Quarantine. "Suffer no Person to come on Shoar on this Island with any Cloaths Chests," decreed the fathers, "till aired upon Nutten Island during the space of 6 hours at least." Nutten or Nut Island is now called Governor's Island after the late van Twiller.

1724: Born, Jacobus Roosevelt, son of Johannes, who lived to become a prosperous merchant, the father of twelve children, and the great-great-grandfather of President Theodore.

1725: William Bradford, whose letter of introduction upon his arrival in Philadelphia in 1685 had described him as "a sober young man who is coming to set up the trade of printing Friends' books," had quarreled in 1693 quite un-Quakerishly with his fellow Quakers as to what a Quaker printer should print, and had transferred his place of business to Pearl Street, New York. He had thus become the city's first printer. He now became its first newspaper publisher. Name of medium: *The New York Gazette.*

1726: Born, Isaac, of the alleged maverick line of Roosevelts, who became the town's leading sugar merchant and, without giving the matter a thought, founded the personal fortune of President Franklin Delano.

1728: Some early Barnum imported a lion, the first to roar on American soil, for exhibition at the Jamaica Fair. Now the school authorities import cows from Westchester to show Manhattan children where their milk comes from.

1729: An early Carnegie, John Millington, bequeathed his collection of books to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, and the Society in turn bequeathed them to New York. For good measure the Society threw in an earlier collection which had been given to it by John Sharp, Lord Bellomont's chaplain. There were 1,642 books in all—the town's first public library—housed in the City Hall on Wall Street.

1731: New York's first fire engines, two hand-drawn affairs, were imported from London.

1733: For a rental of one peppercorn a year, "The Plaine" in front of the fort was leased for eleven years to Colonel Phillipse, John Chambers, and one of the Roosevelts, identified only as John, to be maintained by them as a bowling green, the name by which it is still known.

1735: This was a great year for the colony and for the world since it saw established on Manhattan Toe, over half a century before it became the law of the land upon the adoption of the first amendment to the U.S. Constitution, the principle of freedom of the press—of which, "more anon."

1737: Two years later, according to the invaluable *Valentine's Manual,* edited by Henry Collins Brown, *The New York Gazette* was already briskly engaged in what has since become one of the principal activities of a free press, the advertising of women's undergarments:

> *Moses Slaughter,* Stay Maker from London, has brought with him a Parcel of extraordinary good and Fashionable Stays of his own making of several Sizes and Prices. The work of them he will warrant to be good, and for shape, inferiour to none that are made.
>
> He lodges at present at the House of *William Bradford* next door but one to the treasurer's near the *Fly Market,* where he is ready to suit those that want, with extraordinary good Stays. Or he is ready to wait upon any Ladys or Gentlewomen that please to send for him to their Houses. If any desire to be informed of the Work he has done let them enquire of Mrs. Elliston in the Broad street, or of Mrs. Nicholls in the *Broadway,* who have had his work.

1741: A series of fires on Manhattan Toe led to a reward offered for information as to suspected arsonists. An indentured servant girl in a North River tavern, hoping to gain the reward and also her freedom from a charge of robbery for which she had been arrested, pretended to have information of a great Negro plot to burn the city. On the strength of her unsupported testimony, fourteen colored people were burned at the stake, and eighteen were hanged, along with four white sympathizers including John Ury, a schoolmaster-parson. This wholesale slaughter started a revulsion in favor of the Negroes, which resulted, less than ten years later, in their admission to the suffrage, and, less than twenty

New York Public Library

NEW YORK AND CITY BANKS AND McEVERS MANSION, WALL STREET, 1800

Courtesy of the Museum of the City of New York

FURNISHINGS FROM HOME OF THOMAS CORNELL PEARSON, 43 WALL STREET, *CIRCA* 1810

From the Phelps Stokes Collection of the New York Public Library

BROADWAY AND CITY HALL, 1819

years later, to the first step toward abolition of slavery on Manhattan Toe.

1744: Although the laws against piracy were strictly enforced, privateering during wartime was still a big factor in the enrichment of New York merchants and shippers. The privateer captains were quite the heroes of the town. When "the brave Commodore Warren," whose 300-acre farm included a good part of what is now Greenwich Village, arrived in port in his privateering ship, the *Launceston,* with the French ship *St. François Xavier* in tow, the *Weekly Post Boy* reported:

> This is the fifteenth vessel taken from [by] this ship. She was saluted by all our Privateers, and several other vessels, and the general Acclamation of the People, as a Testimony of the Sense they have of the signal Service done by this gentleman during the continuance of the war.

1744: The Swamp, between the present John and Franklin Streets, which had been part of the old Beekman and Leisler farms and was sometimes called "Beekman's Cripple Bush," was sold to Jacobus Roosevelt for $1,000. The ground is still soft and inclined to be wet; some of the modern buildings stand on piles. It was to this low marshy spot that Edmund Andros of the delicate nose had banished the local tanners. Modern excavations sometimes uncover their old-fashioned vats. The section is still the leather district of New York, but it is worth more than $1,000 now.

1744: Social life at this period was about as usual among Manhattan young folks. William Livingston, after describing the novel features of a "waffle-frolic" which he had attended, concluded with: "However, kissing constitutes a great part of its entertainment."

1747: Cheap labor, imported from adjoining provinces, so alarmed local mechanics that one hundred of them joined in what many consider the town's first real labor union. Object: to protest against low wage scales in other provinces and, at the same time, to increase their own.

1748: Announcement was made of the invention of "a machine which electrifies persons, so that fire shall dart from . . . their bodies."

1751: New York's first cricket match was played on the site of what is now Fulton Market.

1752: A good many people didn't like William Bradford, New York's first printer. He was summed up as a sly old fox by Benjamin Franklin, who knew something about printers and, it has been said, about foxes. But when Bradford died at the age of ninety-four, his own paper, *The New York Gazette,* let itself go as follows:

> He was printer to the government upwards of fifty years; and was a man of great sobriety and industry; a real friend to the poor and needy, and kind and affable to all. His temperance was exceedingly conspicuous; and he was almost a stranger to sickness all his life. He had left off business several years past, and being quite worn out with old age, his lamp of life went out for want of oil.

1752: Masculine attire in the 1750's was obviously of choice and expensive quality, for the well-dressed man wore:

> A pair of smart pumps made up of grained leather
> So thin he can't venture to tread on a feather;
> His buckles like diamonds must glitter and shine.
> Should they cost 50 pounds they would not be too fine.

1752: Several "periodicals of a literary or semiliterary nature decidedly provincial in character" were being published on Manhattan Toe. Still are.

1753: *Almanac for New Yorkers* is responsible for this instructive quotation from a 1753 news report: "Twenty-two frail ladies were taken out of several houses of ill-repute, and committed to the workhouse. The next day 5 of them were condemned to receive 14 lashes upon bare buttocks, before a vast concourse of people, and then ordered to leave the city."

1754: A charter was granted to King's College, now Columbia University. The faculty supported itself by means of a lottery.

1754: Some De Peysters, van Cortlandts, Gallatins, etc., got together and formed the New York Society Library. The spread of learning by this institution is still limited to individuals either vouched for by members or whose names are in the *Social Register.* There is a question as to how much the library was used in its first years even by the socially elect, since the contemporary historian, William Smith, writing in 1756, states: "There is nothing they [New York women] so generally neglect as Reading, and indeed all the arts for the improvement of the mind, in which I confess we [New York men] have set them the example."

This regrettable neglect of the inside of the fashionable Manhattan head may have been due in no small part to the exacting demands of the outside, since "doing the hair" consumed much of the time and attention of both sexes. As for what the barber did to the female head, before the built-up mass was ready to be "ornamented with lappets, gauze, *lace, poufs,* feathers, ropes of pearls or beads, jewels, ornamental pins, and various fantastic gewgaws," we have plenty of contemporary accounts. After providing himself with the necessary pomatum, false hair, powder, tongs, etc., we are told that he "works all into such a state of confusion that you would imagine it was intended for the stuffing of a chair-bottom; then bending it into various curls and shapes over the fingers, he fastens it with black pins so tight to the head that neither the weather nor time have power to alter its position. Thus my lady is dressed for three months at least; during which time it is not in her power to comb her head."

The "opening of a lady's head," as these quarterly renovatings were delicately referred to by the ladies' journals of the day, were, in spite of all the sob sisters could say about them, definitely unpleasant occasions.

1755: The old Dutch distrust of New Englanders, which led Father Peter to build the wall, still lived, and apparently with some justice, in the breast of Robert Vendusen, who complained in this year that "there Caime Eleven or Twelve Strange Men from New England and have Dispossessed my son Johanas and turned him and family out dores . . . I nor my son do not know one of them. . . ."

1756: "Know all men by these presents that I, John Livingston of the City of New York March 1st For and in Consideration of the sum of Eighty Pounds Current money of the Province of New York to me in Hand paid... by these Presents do fully, clearly and absolutely grant, bargain, sell and release unto the said Mr. Aaron Burr his heirs and assigns a certain Negro Man named Caesar."

The Aaron Burr mentioned in the foregoing deed of sale is not the Aaron Burr who figures so variously in our school histories, but his father, the Rev. Aaron Burr, second president of the College of New Jersey, now Princeton University. The item is notable though as an early mention of a name—one of many, of course—destined to be prominent in an entirely new phase of American history. In a way, it also ushers out an old phase, since in 1758, two years after the Rev. Mr. Burr bought the "Negro Man Caesar," an act was passed which made all future offspring of slaves then resident in the province free men and women.

1759: In its first 150 years the city of New York had achieved a population of 13,000. In its next 150 years, it was to achieve a population of nearly 5,000,000.

14

OF ALL THE THINGS THAT WE HAVE SEEN HAPPENING ON Manhattan Toe between the 100th and 150th anniversary of Hudson's godlike landing on the "place where we all got drunk," most significant, of course, were the freeing of the press in 1735 and the first step toward the freeing of the slaves in 1758.

As to freedom of the press, it was this way. Our governors, having lost most of their bouts with the assembly, began fighting among themselves—the occasion being an attempt on the part of new Governor Cosby to grab a portion of the salary of interim Governor van Dam, a local merchant who had filled in between the time of Cosby's appointment and his assumption of the post. Wise old Lewis Morris, who was then chief justice, saw that there was no merit to Cosby's claim, but his two confreres, James De Lancey and Adolphus Phillipse, friends of Cosby, overruled him. Cosby then removed Morris and made De Lancey chief justice; also dismissed van Dam and several of his sympathizers from the governor's council. The whole procedure was so arbitrary and obviously fraudulent that, as in Sloughter's time and later in Cornbury's, the people rose in their newly discovered might.

The form which the rebellion took, however, was different. William Bradford, owner of the only newspaper in the colony and also the public printer, naturally sided with the governor, upheld his acts. But van Dam had powerful friends in Morris

and two of the town's leading counselors, James Alexander and William Smith, all three of whom rather fancied themselves as writers. Bradford's columns being closed to them, they hired John Peter Zenger to set up a rival paper, *The Journall,* in which they sniped away merrily at Cosby, De Lancey, Phillipse, *et al.,* and had the time of their lives.

The temptation to glorify Zenger's part in this episode, so big with the fate of man's emancipation from the rule of tyrants, is almost irresistible—has seldom been resisted. His courageous fight has been acclaimed by Gouverneur Morris as "the morning star of that liberty that subsequently revolutionized America." If the present writer prefers to think of his fellow craftsman as a newspaperman, it is because that is one of the highest compliments he can pay him. He had once worked for William Bradford on *The Gazette,* and Lewis Morris hired him to work on *The Journall,* just as, if he were alive today, he might have once worked for Mrs. Reid on the *Herald Tribune,* and Marshall Field might hire him to work on *PM.* Neither change or, for that matter, a trip in the opposite direction would make him overnight a social or political Einstein or a journalistic Martin Luther. However, it can be said with justice for John Peter Zenger that he was expert in making things poignantly miserable for a corrupt public official.

Cosby ordered four editions of the offending paper to be burned by the public whipper in the presence of the mayor and alderman, and the publisher, Zenger, to be thrown into jail for "false and seditious libel." When Smith and Alexander entered the fray as Zenger's counsel, the new Chief Justice, De Lancey, promptly disbarred them. Meanwhile, the printer continued to publish *The Journall* with the help of his wife, who acted as liaison officer between jail and composing room. And finally, with the eloquent aid of a famous "Philadelphia lawyer," Andrew Hamilton, and practically over the legal body of Chief Justice De Lancey, who presided, he was acquitted by a jury which refused to be intimidated or awed. Thus Cosby's futile effort to restore arbitrary rule on Manhattan Toe had resulted, as Cornbury's flagrant abuse of that rule had resulted a quarter of a century earlier, in the establishment of one of the four freedoms which we of this generation have been fighting to preserve.

It makes small difference that Zenger and his mates didn't "plan it that way." If they had known anything about freedom of the press, they would undoubtedly have been for it. So, probably, would William Bradford. Almost any writing man would. But the chances are at least one thousand to one that neither they nor any of the other leading figures in this political-journalistic dogfight had ever heard of such a thing, let alone given it a single constructive thought. Zenger and Bradford did their jobs, the others spat their spite. Yet by their very existence, as had happened in Jacob Leisler's case, these political and journalistic feudists of 1735 helped to lay the foundations of the republic.

If greedy old Cosby and his friends helped, too, in spite of themselves, by their petty squabbling and their Hitlerish burning of the books, it only proves what we know to be true, that "God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform." And if a steadily increasing love of fairness and love of liberty on the part of the people themselves played the real star role in the performance, as I believe it did, that is more heartening still.

The decision to abolish slavery in the province—for that is what the Act of 1758 amounted to—is another case in point. It would be quite in the spirit of storybook history if we could record that this New York action stemmed from the same deeply humanitarian impulses which led Abraham Lincoln to write the Emancipation Proclamation over a century later. We natives of the Middle Atlantic and North Atlantic states, who have plumed ourselves through the years with a slight feeling of moral superiority in this matter of slavery, naturally assume that it did; but it didn't. The disappearance of slavery in New York—and this goes as well for Wendell Phillips' Boston—was due to the fact that the great trading centers on the Atlantic coast above the Mason and Dixon line developed commercially and industrially instead of agriculturally, as Virginia and the other Southern colonies did.

It is a shame to prick the bubble—but the plain fact is that by 1758 it had become cheaper for most people in these Northern communities to free their slaves than to pay their keep.

This is not the first time that longitude and latitude have entered into this chronicle. It won't be the last. These basic things push us around, not we them. There are few *Mein Kampfs*

in world history, and few *Il Principes,* and those which have emerged have been not so much plans for Hitlerian wickedness or Machiavellian guile as visions, usually distorted, of what such wickedness or guile might accomplish. Bad people don't sit down and decide, "I'll create a vile thing like slavery." Good people, even good people like Abraham Lincoln, without *some* propulsion from the realistic life around them, do not, cannot, take the steps necessary to abolish it.

The propulsion comes, sometimes crudely, as in Dutch Reformed Jacob Leisler's unwillingness to pay customs duties to a Catholic deputy of the hated Stuarts, and before we know it, we have a brief glimpse of what it may mean to live under a government which derives its strength not from divine right or dictatorial power but from the people. Sometimes it comes corruptly, as in Cornbury's time, when a dissolute spendthrift's lust for graft led him to proclaim his virtue by prosecuting Presbyterians and enriching Episcopalians—and suddenly we have a promise of the priceless gift of religious freedom.

Now, in the middle 1700's, because the dictates of economic wisdom convinced city-living, sea-trading, merchandising Northerners that slave labor, obviously profitable on the cotton and tobacco plantations of the South, was unprofitable and therefore unnecessary in urban commercial activities, we have perhaps the highest spiritual achievement of our people: the freeing of the black man from bondage.

No one can read the history of our country, of any country, honestly and intelligently without realizing that this is how history is made, how things happen and always have happened in what we call this best of all worlds. A cold-blooded analysis, you say? Yes. But enough has already been told in these paragraphs about the past, enough is happening before our eyes in the present, to convince any reasoning being *who is willing to reason* that we live in a cold-blooded world. We cannot hope to understand and evaluate properly what was about to happen on Manhattan Toe—cold-blooded, commercial things at first, but they led miraculously to revolution and the republic!—unless we reject once and for all the storybook versions of those events which have been fed to us for generations as if they were authentic milk from the maternal breast, and accept instead the funda-

New York Public Library

BATTERY PARK, 1822

From the Phe'ps Stokes Collection of the New York Public Library

BROADWAY FROM THE BOWLING GREEN

mental, unshakable truth that human nature in the 1770's was what it always has been and still is—human nature.

This narrative cannot hope to give a complete picture of the thirteen colonies' fight for freedom. This is not a history of a country, but of a few square miles of the lower end of Manhattan Island. The Revolution, the Civil War, and lesser events of great national importance can appear in these paragraphs only as they affect the community on Manhattan Toe, as, let us say, the Great Fire of 1835 affected it, or the Great Blizzard of 1888, or the Great Panic of 1929. But since the Revolution *did* affect it momentously, we should know some fundamental truths about it. And we can't do that unless we throw out the storybook ideas we learned in school and face the historical facts of life.

The author emphasizes these points partly in self-protection against his own innate tendency toward hero worship. Only with the greatest difficulty did he restrain himself from becoming positively lyrical over old Father Stuyvesant and his wooden leg. He was tempted almost beyond his strength to give gay young Tom Dongan the laurel crown so many have bestowed upon him as a founding father of democracy. And as for that really democratic governor, His Lordship of Bellomont, the first man to inject both sanity and sympathy into colonial rule on Manhattan Toe—well, the point is that the author, knowing his weakness, must keep clearly before his eyes, and his reader's eyes, the proven fact that heroes result from situations more often than situations from heroes. Otherwise when he comes to men of really heroic mold, as brave as Washington, as wise as Jefferson, as brilliant as Hamilton, he might give quite unwittingly a distorted picture of what was after all a perfectly natural and logical development, the American Revolution.

15

THE OLD AMERICAN CUSTOM OF CALLING GEORGE WASHINGTON the "Father of His Country" is a good one. He was indubitably the head of the American house, entitled to sit at the head of the American table. As to sheer biological paternity, however, another George, George of Brunswick, third German of that name to sit on the throne of England, would seem to have a prior claim.

Not even George of Brunswick deserves full credit, because he was but the current instrument of the fight for the Teutonic ideal of autocratic rule, against which a good part of our present-day world has so recently been engaged; but it was not until he appeared on the scene that the war on the American front assumed alarming proportions.

Robert Walpole, Earl of Oxford, who was the first British prime minister to wield effectively the overwhelming powers of his office, had rendered the first two German Georges comparatively harmless. With George I the trick was easy because His Majesty couldn't speak or understand the English language and didn't know what it was all about. George II got around more, but Walpole, with the towering figure of William Pitt always on the horizon, kept for many years the upper hand.

Although Walpole was a man whose personal integrity was not always above suspicion, he nevertheless pursued, so far as the colonies were concerned, a peace-and-prosperity or full-

dinner-pail policy which gave them a long period of comparative comfort and much needed rest from petty persecution. The same policy, sensibly pursued, would have postponed for many years the possibility of war between England and her American possessions. The colonists had won all the self-government that they at that time wished or needed, and the British, until George III came to the throne, were quite willing they should have it. Relations between British rule on the eastern and western side of the Atlantic had never been more friendly than they were in 1760 when George III became king.

To say that the United States of America would not have emerged *some time* without the unprovoked encroachments of George III is, of course, absurd, but that it would have done so in Washington's time or Jefferson's or Hamilton's is extremely unlikely. It is a disturbing thought that we might have had to depend on somebody besides Washington to stand by at Valley Forge, somebody besides Jefferson to write the Declaration of Independence, somebody besides Hamilton to force through a Federal Constitution, but as an illustration of what has already been said about situations making men instead of men making situations, we may as well recognize that it was distinctly in the cards.

These truths, to this observer, would seem to be self-evident. On the other hand the natural tendency of historians, working on the sports columnists' formula that every fight is the battle of the century, has been to dramatize the American Revolution into a great war in which the people of America, having been browbeaten by the people of England, fought for a national independence against a national tyranny. (That this theory has been carefully nursed by Anglophobe politicians in our own day needs no comment here.) The point is that it wasn't the people of England who browbeat the people of America, and that—in a day when there were no cables, radios, or fast mails, and very few newspapers—they didn't even know that the browbeating was going on. Moreover, their responsible leaders, men like William Pitt and Edmund Burke, when they did know about it, protested manfully against it.

In short, the Revolution was not a war between the English people and the American people, but between a stupid king,

who wasn't even an Englishman and was later declared insane, and a group of his would-be loyal subjects. And, as will be shown by what happened in New York, it wasn't a war for independence, either, until sixteen years of unabated royal stupidity—or insanity, if you will—had left to the Founding Fathers no alternative.

The royal offensive on the American front opened with the imposition of a high tariff on sugar imported into the colonies. The only result of this move was to increase greatly the already formidable business of smuggling, which had existed since the beginning of British rule as a means of thwarting previous attempts to impose tariff and navigation laws on the colonies. With passage of the Sugar Act smuggling became, or seemed to become, a patriotic duty.

Two years later, Parliament, still under the leadership of the King's henchmen, passed an act intended to raise revenue in America by requiring that all legal documents must bear stamps. This was the famous Stamp Act, indubitably a motivating force in American history, not so much because it raised squarely the question of taxation without representation, as because it caused the colonies to get together for the first time in an effort to do something about it.

Before the passage of the act many speeches were made on the other side of the Atlantic by the colonists' staunch friends, Pitt, Barré, Burke, Fox, Wilkes, and others—all stressing the old argument that since the colonies had no representatives in Parliament, they were not subject to taxation by that body. The argument was, of course, a somewhat disingenuous one, because the last thing the American colonists wanted was representation in the British parliament; what they wanted was to be exempt from all taxation except that which they themselves imposed, and to be allowed to keep at home and use as they saw fit the revenues from such taxes.

Far more important than this flow of words was the meeting in New York on October 7, 1765, of the representatives of nine of the thirteen colonies in what might be considered the forerunner of the First Continental Congress. Officially the meeting didn't accomplish much; but it meant that men from the various colonies, who had never before found it worth while to undertake the colossal journeys which lay between them, got to know

each other and found common grounds for united action against what threatened to become, through one man's lust for autocratic power, a common enemy. It is also to be supposed that being exceedingly practical men, they agreed so far as the Stamp Act was concerned on just what should happen—but this, of course, like most important decisions at such conferences, was "off the record."

What happened in New York was plenty. Isaac Barré, one of the colonists' eloquent defenders in the British parliament—the man, by the way, for whom Barre, Vermont, and (with John Wilkes) Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, were named—had referred to Americans as "Sons of Liberty." This happy phrase was now adopted by a group of youthful direct-actionists on Manhattan Toe as the name of a secret society pledged to resist the Stamp Act and all similar encroachments. At a meeting on October 31, 1765, in the "long room" of the Province Arms, this group, led by Marinus Willett, Isaac Sears, John Lamb, and others prominent in the pre-Revolution period, adopted a resolution—afterward subscribed to by the town's leading merchants—to buy no goods from England or English possessions until the Stamp Act was repealed; appointed a committee to urge other colonies to adopt similar measures; and offered a reward of £500 for the discovery of any individual using the hated stamps. Then, deviating from dignity, they began rioting in the streets.

James McEvers, who had been appointed official stamp collector, took fright and refused to receive the stamps when they arrived. Cadwallader Colden, a resident of the colony who was filling in as lieutenant governor during one of those frequent gubernatorial gaps, was made of sterner stuff. He only not received the stamps and deposited them within the fort, but ordered the now formidable guns of that institution loaded with grapeshot and trained on the Bowling Green and lower Broadway. Major Thomas James, commandant of the fort—it was now Fort George, of course—boasted that he would "cram the stamps down the rebel throats."

So, on the evening of All Saint's Day, the Sons of Liberty got busy. First, they erected a gibbet in the Fields (now City Hall Park), which were being used more and more as the scene of

outdoor patriotic demonstrations, and hung Governor Colden in effigy alongside another stuffed figure representing the devil. The latter held in his hand a huge boot, which by a not too clever pun, stood for Lord Bute, who supposedly drafted the Stamp Act. Then forming a torchlight procession and bearing the gallows and effigies aloft, they marched down Broadway in defiance of the threatening cannon, knocked with clubs on the doors of the fort, dared the soldiers on its ramparts to fire on them, dragged the Governor's coach from the gubernatorial stables, tore down the wooden fence around the Bowling Green, made a great bonfire of it, set the effigies in the coach, and burned the whole outfit under the eyes of the Governor and the garrison. Then they went over to Major James's house and used every last stick of furniture in it to keep the conflagration going.

The town was full of British soldiers, under the command of General Thomas Gage, who had been sent over by the King's ministers to intimidate the citizens and thus forestall just such scenes as had now taken place. Gage, however, did not dare turn the soldiers on the mob for fear of solidifying further the community's resentment and precipitating immediate revolution. So the next morning Colden, knowing he was beaten, turned the stamps over to the mayor, who locked them in the City Hall and forgot about them. The following February, after a bitter parliamentary debate which brought the elder Pitt back from a sickbed to denounce the Government's treatment of the colonies, the Stamp Act was repealed.

It has been suggested in these paragraphs that, from England's standpoint, the American Revolution was an unnecessary war. How unnecessary is illustrated vividly by the behavior of His Majesty's subjects on Manhattan Toe when news of the repeal reached these shores. The assembly, in haste to show its loyalty, authorized the erection of statues, one to their champion, Pitt, and one even to the King himself, the latter, a massive lead equestrian affair, to be erected on the very spot where the Governor's coach and the Major's furniture had been burned; and the very men who had performed these acts of defiance joined, on June 4 of the same year, in a celebration of the King's birthday, which was similar in character and duration to that which, 155

years before, had welcomed to our city that other great blunderer, Henry Hudson.

Echoes of his American subjects' cries of "Long Live the King, the Darling of the People" had scarcely died on Manhattan Toe when George came forward with his Townshend plan, which was simply another and far more subtle effort to thwart the people's will.

On its surface this plan devised by Viscount Townshend, George's Chancellor of the Exchequer, was a revival of the already unsuccessful scheme of placing duties on products imported into the colonies, but it contained a few new quirks which the Viscount felt would make it more acceptable to colonial authorities. Taking advantage of the continued serious illness of Pitt, he succeeded in jockeying the plan into a series of parliamentary statutes known as the Townshend Acts, which imposed duties on oil, wine, and fruit imported by the colonies from Spanish and Portuguese possessions, and on glass, lead, paint, paper, and tea imported from whatever source, the revenues to be spent, as the Viscount craftily explained to his parliamentary colleagues, in the colonies and for their benefit.

That's what the Viscount said. What the Acts said was that the revenues were to be spent to pay a fixed salary to the royal governors—who, as we have seen, had hitherto been kept in check by dependence for their spending money on the colonial assemblies—and salaries to judges to be appointed by the king instead of by the local authorities, and pensions and salaries for a general civil list to be created at the pleasure of the crown. Obviously this plan, if allowed to operate long enough, would not only have robbed the colonists of a large measure of the self-government which they had already achieved, but would have foisted upon them a powerful group of royal spies and pensioners who would constitute a continual menace to whatever small measure of liberty they might retain.

Obviously the King and his advisers had quite underestimated the astuteness of the people with whom they were dealing. For feeling against the Townshend Acts in all the colonies ran higher even than it had against the Stamp Act, but nowhere so high as in New York. And it was this hostility which led, on January 16, 1770, six weeks before the Boston Massacre and five years before

Concord and Lexington, to the Battle of Golden Hill, which, in spite of the slightly comic-opera atmosphere with which some Boston-minded historians have been inclined to obscure it, was nevertheless the scene of the first bloodshed and the first life lost in the war between George III and his American colonies.

16

MENTION HAS ALREADY BEEN MADE OF NEW YORK'S VERY inferior public relations department as compared with Boston's. Nowhere is this inferiority more evident than in this matter of the first conflict of the Revolution. Golden Hill wasn't much of a battle. Nor was Concord and Lexington. Nor, judged by modern standards, was the Revolution much of a war. Colonial forges produced as ammunition for Washington and his men only 30,000 tons of iron a year. U.S. forges produced more than 90,000,000 tons of steel a year for Eisenhower. Everything in the early days must be judged by comparison with the standards of those days and on that basis, it seems to the author, although a Massachusetts boy by birth, that Boston and vicinity has had more publicity than it deserves, and more luck.

Take that "shot heard round the world." Would it have been heard so far or so long, if the spot where "the embattled farmers stood" hadn't been practically in Ralph Waldo Emerson's back yard? And as for the horseback ride that preceded the shot, where would Paul Revere be if it hadn't been for lusty boosting by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow? As a matter of fact, Revere was only one of three on that now famous ride and succeeded in getting himself captured by the British, whereas his fellow couriers, Samuel Prescott and William Dawes, one or both of them, got through as planned to Concord, and they, not Paul, gave the alarm "by the rude bridge that arched the flood."

Dawes, by the way, was an ancestor of a not wholly unpublicized figure of more recent times, former Vice-President Charles G. "Hell an' Maria" Dawes. A friend of Mr. Dawes, faced with this little known fact, said: "I don't believe it. If William Dawes took that ride and missed the publicity, he was no relative of Charlie's." Which only goes to show what a really good public relations man Longfellow was. Also it shows that some people and some places have all the luck. Nevertheless, the Battle of Golden Hill does have its spot in American history, and in case you are interested, "Listen, my children, and you shall hear."

New York had a special reason for resenting the Townshend Acts because they were accompanied by a statute summarily suspending the legislative power of the New York assembly until it had complied with all the requirements of the so-called Mutiny or Quartering Act, which had been passed the previous year to force the colonists on Manhattan Toe to shoulder most of the expense of the British soldiers who had been sent out to enforce the Stamp Act and who still remained, a source of continual annoyance to the people—especially to the young bucks of the town who were continually losing their best girls to the handsome strangers.

The assembly was forced to comply to maintain its existence, but its reluctant submission to the royal demands merely added fuel to the long-smoldering hostility between the soldiers and the Sons of Liberty.

It is impossible at this time-distance to place the blame accurately for the disturbance which broke out among the British and American young. Perhaps the British youngsters were to blame for taking the American youngsters' girls away from them, but with their bright red coats and military figures, perhaps they couldn't help it. "Single men in barracks" have a way with girls in garrisoned towns. On the other hand stalwart young men like Isaac Sears, quite regardless of their feelings about the Viscount Townshend, could not be blamed for resenting the continued presence of these well-dressed menaces to their choicest and chastest possessions.

Rioting is not a practice to be encouraged any more than the laying of unfair tariffs or the avoidance of them by wholesale smuggling. But we must remember that a bunch of rambunctious

young British soldiers, with nothing to do, and a bunch of equally rambunctious young American colonists, with much to do and a fanatically patriotic determination to do it, were cooped up in the bit of ground between the Battery and the Fields. And what have you? What you always have under such circumstances—trouble.

The immediate point at issue between the Liberty boys and the army boys was a flagpole in the Fields—known to trustful tourists in modern "rubberneck" wagons as the Liberty Pole—which the Liberty Boys kept erecting and the army boys kept tearing down. Two days after one of the down-beats, young Isaac Sears and another Liberty boy were strolling down Broadway when they spotted three army boys pinning up posters which reflected on the ancestry, personal integrity, and intestinal fortitude of the Sons of Liberty. Sears and his friends "arrested" two of the soldiers and were, so they said, taking them to the City Hall to deliver them to the mayor, when a sortie of twenty soldiers, with drawn swords and pointed bayonets, undertook to rescue their comrades in arms, and a group of apparently innocent bystanders, armed with clubs of various sorts, joined in the melee.

Finally the army boys, pursued by the Liberty boys, retired to Golden Hill (previously identified in this chronicle as part of Dirck Vandercliff's *bouwerie*), which was the name given to a small tract centering around what is now the corner of John and William Streets. There is nothing golden about this region now, except possibly for landlords and real estate operators, and there is no hill, since most of Manhattan Island has been leveled off to give that monotonous regularity which has so offended the artistic eye. But that is neither here nor there. In Isaac Sears's time it was Golden Hill, and in the back yard of the Golden Hill Inn the Liberty boys and the army boys continued their battle until several had been wounded on either side. Then, British officers appeared and shooed the army boys to their barracks. Thus the first day of the Battle of Golden Hill ended, most unsatisfactorily, in a tie.

The army boys didn't like being sent to bed like a lot of naughty children, and showed it the following morning by breaking up a meeting of citizens said to be assembling peaceably in the Fields, and by sticking a bayonet through a young lady's skirt.

The Liberty boys, refusing to let the latter action go as a sex crime, insisted on making it an international issue—and the second day of the Battle of Golden Hill was on. This day was more decisive than the other, since the army boys actually killed an American sailor, and the Liberty boys, without the aid of any official intervention, drove the army boys to the protection of their barracks.

Six weeks later, Bostonians staged a similar riot, called it a massacre, and achieved history-book immortality!

More immediately effective than any of these street battles was the boycott promptly clamped down by the colonial merchants on the purchase of goods from England and English possessions. In this connection it is worth noting that although the ownership of land continued to be the chief source of American wealth until after the Revolution, and one of the richest of the landowners, Washington, led the American forces in the field, the merchant class, whatever they traded in, had now reached a position of paramount importance in colonial life. It was their interests that the King attacked; it was their resistance which made those attacks futile.

Merchants and shippers on the other side of the Atlantic, bereft of their American trade, were soon bringing pressure on Parliament which resulted in January 1770 in the repeal of all of the Townshend Acts except the least important of them, the one imposing a duty on tea, which was retained as a face-saving device to prevent the King and his ministers from seeming to surrender the right to tax the colonies as they saw fit.

New York, then as now a strictly commercial city, immediately withdrew from the nonimportation agreements. Some of the other colonies grumbled, said they ought to stand "on the principle of the thing," but soon followed New York's example and resumed trading with England in all commodities except tea; that they smuggled in from Holland as needed. Whereupon King George and his advisers had another bright idea.

When the original Townshend Acts were passed, the wily viscount had set the proposed duties at a very conservative level. The direct tax on tea, for instance, was only threepence a pound—the idea being that the colonists would not be tempted to increase their smuggling activities and certainly would not go to

war to avoid so trifling a levy. But companies like the East India Company, which largely controlled the importation of this product, were required to remit secretly twelvepence on every pound direct to King George's exchequer. This amount was, of course, added to the price before the tea reached American shores and thus became a very considerable added indirect tax on the colonists.

The next move was to relieve the East India Company of the requirement to pay the twelvepence drawback to the English treasury and thus, without abolishing the threepence levy on the colonists, make possible the sale of duty-paid English tea at a lower price than the smuggled Holland variety. By this ruse the King and his henchmen hoped not so much to raise revenue as to trick the colonists, through appealing to their cupidity, into a *de facto* acceptance of Parliament's right to impose taxes without their consent.

Again the colonial mind was quicker than King George and his advisers suspected, and again Boston had all the luck. With shiploads of tea under sail for Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Charleston, the Boston ship blew in first, the Boston Tea Party was held; and when the New York-bound ship finally appeared off Sandy Hook on April 18, 1774, and was not allowed even to enter the bay, the story wasn't big enough to rate page 4. Meanwhile, as a punishment for Boston's forthright action and to make her serve as an example to the other colonies, Lord North, who was now prime minister, still further focused the eyes of the colonial world on Massachusetts by closing the port of Boston, suspending the colony's charter, quartering soldiers in the province, and transferring to England all trials resulting from riots of the Tea Party type.

At these outrages the fires of patriotism blazed high in New York and elsewhere throughout the colonies, but as was so often to happen during this period, New York, one of the three great colonial capitals, was least illumined by their flames of glory. The First Continental Congress convened at Philadelphia. The first American Army laid siege to Boston. For the moment New York was but a way station on the road to history.

17

THE READER, AFTER BEING PROMISED AN OCCASIONAL WALK, has had deplorably little exercise. He hasn't been out of the house since 1700, and then only briefly on his way to a Brooklyn picnic. As for the author, he finds himself discussing wars and reasons for wars and world politics and world politicians as if he were a regular historian. It's time we both shook a leg.

One of the first things we should notice about the town is that something new has been added: a theater. A frivolous thing to note, perhaps, on the eve of war, but since it and its successors were to play such a major part in the future of America's Pleasure Town, the little red wooden structure on John Street between Broadway and Nassau, with its two rows of boxes, gallery, and pit, is a "must" sight in the New York of 1775.

There may have been theatrical performances on Manhattan Toe as early as 1700 or even before, but there seems to be no record of them. In fact the first evidence that New York, destined to be one of the two or three great theatrical centers of the world, had become drama-conscious is contained in this cautious theatrical jotting from the *Weekly Post Boy* of February 26, 1750: "Last week arrived here a Company of Comedians from Philadelphia, who, we hear, have taken a convenient Room for their purpose in one of the Buildings belonging to the *Honl. Rip Van Dam,* Esq., deceased, in *Nassau street;* where they intend to

perform as long as the Season lasts, provided they meet with suitable Encouragement."

The *"Honl. Rip Van Dam"* referred to is the gentleman who had the salary tiff with the late Governor Cosby, which resulted indirectly in establishing the principle of freedom of the press. One likes to think that some of the pay checks which he presumably saved from the Governor's greedy clutchings may have gone into the erection of this structure with "a convenient Room," and thus gave a helping hand to establishing a New York theater as well as a free New York press.

But if New York theatergoers expected to get comedies from these Philadelphia comedians, they must have been disappointed in the opening bill, a double feature consisting of Shakespeare's *Richard III* and Otway's *The Orphan.* Ideas of what fun is, however, differ, for the dramatic critic of the *Weekly Post Boy* on September 24, after the Philadelphians' "comedy" season had closed in July, gave an obvious sigh of relief. "Thursday Evening last," he wrote, "The Tragedy of Cato was play'd at the Theatre in the City, before a numerous audience, the greater part of whom were of the Opinion that it was pretty well performed: As it was the fullest Assembly that has appeared in that House, it may serve to prove that the Taste of this Place is not so much vitiated, or lost to a sense of Liberty, but that they can prefer a Representation of Virtue to those of a loose Character."

The "convenient Room" had a stage raised five feet from the floor and lighted by six wax tapers and a chandelier consisting of a barrel hoop into which a half dozen nails had been driven to hold candles. There were no curtains or drops. Few of the names of the artists appearing at this first New York playhouse have come down to us, but there is a record of a benefit performance for one of them, advertised as follows: "Mr. Jago humbly begs that all ladies and gentlemen will be so kind as to favour him with their company, as he never had a benefit before, and is just out of prison."

The John Street Theatre, which was the one active in the early 1770's, was more professional in character but still crude so far as scenery and properties went. The company, however, under the management of Lewis Hallam, seems to have been an excellent one, with a repertoire which ranged from the tragedies of

Shakespeare to the comedies of Congreve and Goldsmith. No less an authority than Mr. Rufus Rockwell Wilson has insisted that "the public taste was exacting and the art of acting was judged by severe standards.... The social status of the actor, on the other hand, was low. Taprooms were frequently associated with the theatre, and at that period, and for many years afterwards, profligate women were allowed access to a certain part of it"—a fact which, he admitted, had no blighting effect on the attendance.

And speaking of women, John Burchet, stay- and habit-maker, was doing a flourishing business at the "Sign of the Crown and Stays." The sign, a literal one, displayed the crown of His Britannic Majesty and a pair of corsets spread invitingly open to receive the ample charms of one of His Majesty's fair American subjects. As to the unsanitary condition of the feminine coiffure, the author regrets to report but little improvement. *The Universal Magazine,* in 1768, thus described the plight of a would-be amorous swain in his pursuit of a belle of the period:

> When he views your tresses thin
> Tortur'd by some French friseur
> Horsehair, hemp and wool within
> Garnished with a di'mond skewer.
>
> When he scents the mingled steam
> Which your plaster'd heads are rich in,
> Lard and meal and clouted cream,
> Can he love a walking-kitchen?

Males were also still pretty much under the tyranny of the barber's daily ministrations, if we may judge by an advertisement describing an escaped slave, which after noting that he "is likely to drink"—which doesn't exactly date him—concludes with this apparently clinching means of identification: "he ties his own hair behind."

In spite of the prevalence of sedan chairs, ownership of a suitable horse-drawn vehicle was regarded as the surest sign of the socially arrived. Maria De Peyster Spratt was said to be the first woman to own a coach and four, and Levinius Clarkson the first to import a cabriolet from Europe.

From the Phelps Stokes Collection of the New York Public Library

SOUTH STREET FROM MAIDEN LANE, 1828

Courtesy of the New-York Historical Society

WALL STREET, 1830

(From Bourne's *Views of New York*)

The Kennedy mansion, which was a center of social activity before, through, and after the Revolution, stood at what is now No. 1 Broadway on a plot of land purchased from Abraham De Peyster, complete with the building previously erected thereon, for £66. With land still so reasonably priced, even the city houses of the well to do were bountifully garnished with lawns and gardens. The Walton mansion, built by a wealthy merchant in 1754 in what is now Franklin Square, boasted gardens which ran all the way to the East River. One of the massive piers of the present-day Brooklyn Bridge covers the lot on Cherry Street where stood the mansion later occupied by Washington during the first part of his stay as President. This street with the agreeable name, although glum-looking enough now, was in the pre- and post-Revolution period one of the city's choicest residential thoroughfares. The most fashionable place to live, however, was Wall Street.

Shouldering the homes of the rich were the taverns in the town. Most famous in our day, both because of the historical events which later occurred there and because of a durability which kept it intact into modern times, was Fraunces' Tavern, then called the Queen's Head, operated by a picturesque West Indian who turned out to be one of the town's stanchest patriots. Close by the Kennedy house, at what is now No. 9 Broadway, stood the most popular tavern of the late Dutch period, built and operated by Martin Creiger but since 1763 under the management of a Mrs. Steel, who formerly kept the King's Arms in Broad Street. But now she rejoiced in this "more commodious house, where she will not only have it in her power to accommodate gentlemen with conveniences requisite as a tavern, but also with genteel lodging apartments, which she doubts not will give satisfaction to every one who will be pleased to give her that honor."

Montagnie's Tavern, where the Sons of Liberty made their headquarters, was at the corner of Broadway and Murray, and Hampden Hall, to which they moved when proprietor Montagnie began to show less enthusiasm for their cause, was across the way at the corner of Ann. Principal tavern of the period, however, was the Province Arms, also known as the City Arms and the New York Arms, formerly the homestead of the lordly De Lanceys,

a two-story, gray-stone structure with grounds sloping down to the Hudson. Here was held the Gargantuan feast to celebrate the birthday of George III, "Darling of the People," and from its windows a clear view was to be had of the Fields where the guns went off as the toasts were drunk.

Perhaps the most significant sign of the gradual growth of the community on Manhattan Toe from less than 5,000 people in 1700 to more than 25,000 in 1775 was the transfer of communal activities from the Bowling Green to the spot where the Dutch had been wont to pasture their cows. Colonial government still centered around the fort and its appendage, the Battery, which had now developed into the town's principal defense against attack by sea. The presence of the City Hall in Wall Street anchored municipal officialdom at that point. But the people, as we have seen in the previous chapter, had made the Common Ground, or the Fields, their own, not because it was a conveniently central point—it was still "way out of town"—but because it was the only open land left on Manhattan Toe large enough to hold the crowds when the town was either very happy or very mad.

First of the official structures which were to make this future City Hall Park the nearest thing to a civic center that New York has ever possessed was, lugubriously, an almshouse; second, also lugubriously, was a jail; and third, even more lugubriously, was the notorious Bridewell prison, paid for from the proceeds of a lottery. These three square-shouldered, gray-stone structures stood grimly in a row; and when the whipping post, stocks, and pillory were brought up from Wall Street and set up in front of the jail, and a busy little gallows erected at its rear, the grimness was complete. This was, however, in 1775 the city's playground.

The East Side of Manhattan Toe between Broadway, Park Row, Chatham Street, and the continuous line of docks and shipyards along Water Street, which, by virtue of the filling-in process, had now succeeded Pearl Street as the river-front thoroughfare, was a fairly solid mixture of residential and business buildings of variegated design, with the old Dutch style still predominating. The West Side was as yet sparsely settled above the present Liberty Street but was neatly laid out in blocks in readiness for the anticipated boom in Manhattan real estate. Greenwich Village had become what its name, in the literal sense, implies.

Broadway, when it reached the southern boundary of the Fields, was known as Great George Street, and so remained until long after the Revolution. Soon after it left the Fields it became a mere lane, which differed little from the Indian trail of Hudson's time. In the 1770's, and for many years thereafter, through traffic from Manhattan Toe swerved to the right from Broadway at Park Row and skirted the Fields into Chatham Street and Chatham Square (both named for the elder Pitt), and finally debouched into the Island's great north-south thoroughfare, the Bowery, which led past vast estates to the Boston Post Road.

Venturesome travelers along the last-named highway brought back rumors of little known groups of houses, still too small to call villages, in the Island's northern reaches. These tiny communities and others across the East and North Rivers were mostly called by corruptions of their original Dutch names: for example, Harlan, Bloomindoll, Morrisinig, Brookland, Bushwijk, Vlissingen, Weahawk, and Hobuck. Far up the Hudson, reached chiefly in sloops, was the lordly region sometimes called Donck's Colony but more often and more enduringly *De Jonkheer's Landt.*

A keen observer of downtown Manhattan at this time might spot an occasional doctor's office, for the practice of medicine, so neglected in the Dutch and early English periods, had begun to take on the dignity with which we now gratefully endow it. Doctors John and Samuel Bard, father and son, had been largely responsible for this professional and social habilitation. The former, who was of the old-fashioned purge-and-cup school, nevertheless possessed such an effective bedside manner that he rose quickly to the top of his profession and became after the Revolution president of the Medical Society of New York. The younger Bard, who had studied under the great European masters and really knew his Hippocrates and Galen, founded in 1768 the colony's first medical school. Two years later a charter was granted the New York Hospital, another "first." The war postponed for the duration the completion of the latter institution, but the realization of the need of hospitalization as early as 1770 shows that in the colonial city of New York the medical tide had turned.

A few private schools, tucked away in the side streets, carried most of the colony's pedagogical burden. These were supported

chiefly by the churches, which had multiplied with rabbit-like fecundity following the repulse of Governor Cornbury's war against the Presbyterians. That once harried denomination now boasted a mother church in Wall Street and a lusty offspring on Park Row, familiarly known as "The Brick Meeting." We are told that the Rev. John Rodgers, first pastor of the Brick church, was a man of "the most majestic dignity, and in manners so formal that the last thing he and his wife always did before retiring for the night was to salute each other with a bow and a curtsey." Suggestion that married life in clerical circles might not always be so formal, however, is to be found in this newspaper doggerel celebrating the marriage in 1775 of one Parson Moore to Miss Charity Clark:

> The good Parson deserved a good Clark,
> Such happiness fate had in store.
> 'Twas Charity blew up the Spark
> And fixed the bright flame in one Moore.

Jews worshiped in a synagogue on what was then Mill Street. Only Catholics had not yet come into the enjoyment of that religious liberty of which the colony was so proud. But Dutch Reformed, with its Lower, Middle, and North churches, and Episcopal, with Trinity and its famous chapels of St. George's and St. Paul's, remained the most influential and most fashionable of the faiths. Of all these churches only St. Paul's, on the west side of Broadway at the juncture with the Fields, remains in the form and place it knew in 1775. The fact that this beautiful church seems now to have its steeple at the wrong end is due to the fact that it was designed not to face Broadway but the Hudson, toward which sloped long, tree-shaded lawns.

Sin was also marching on, and coming to rest in some instances painfully close to the shrines of righteousness. A visitor to New York in 1774 figured that "above 500 ladies of pleasure keep lodgings contiguous within the consecrated liberties of St. Paul's." The colony's one shrine of higher learning also was not exempt, according to the same visitor, who regretted that the entrance to King's College was "thro one of the streets where the most noted prostitutes live. This," he concluded, "is certainly a temptation to the youth that have occasion to pass so often that way."

Sports events of the less desirable sort were also practiced with what seemed like official sponsorship, if we may judge from this advertisement announcing "a grand Cock Match, on the Green near the Workhouse (greatest Part of which will be converted into a Pit) between several Hundreds of plain Liberty and Property Cocks with their own Spurs, Combs and Gills, and some Cocks of a French extraction, with gaudy Feathers, Gaffs, and Gantlets finely trimmed, that have been for some time kept up and are highly fed, with artificial Balls compounded of Garlic, Old Madeira Wine etc. The Bets will be very high; as the Battles will not be decided there, they are to adjourn to the City Hall, where the Sport will be continued for two or three Days; a Young Gentleman, but an Old Cock Fighter . . . is to be mounted on the Bench, and determine all Disputes that may arise."

Most exciting sports events of this period, however, was the hurdle race against time staged in his nightshirt by royalist-minded President Myles Cooper of King's College over the back fence of that institution of learning, while an eighteen-year-old student, by his eloquence from the front porch, held back a mob of overardent Liberty Boys who had come to take "Prexy" for a ride. The occasion was notable for another reason: it was the first time, and until our independence was won, the only time when this eloquent young man ever lifted his voice to save a royalist or, for that matter, a royalist's shirt. The student's name was Alexander Hamilton.

18

NEWS OF THE BATTLE OF CONCORD AND LEXINGTON CAME clattering down the Bowery one Sunday afternoon in April 1775 on the hoofs of two sweating steeds on which were mounted special couriers of that Boston–New York "post" established so many years before by Governor Lovelace "consonant to the commands of his sacred majesty, who strictly enjoins all his American subjects to enter into a close correspondency with each other."

His sacred Majesty probably did a flip-flop in his grave, if from that vantage point he was able to observe what happened in New York that Sunday afternoon and in the days that followed, as a result of this "close correspondency." For the news that the war between King George and Massachusetts had actually reached the musketry stage was all that was needed to inflame the Sons of Liberty into actions more constructive than chasing nightshirted royalist sympathizers over collegiate back fences.

Before the sweat was dry on the post horses' flanks, the Sons had crashed the British arsenal at the corner of Wall and Broad, seized six hundred muskets, and passed them around where they would do the most good. Thus armed, they then seized Whitehall, which had now become the customhouse, laid an embargo on the ships lying in the harbor, and set up an informal temporary government—all before sundown on that Sabbath afternoon.

A few days later, led by John Lamb, who was to become a

famous general under Washington, the Sons descended in a night raid on a military storehouse maintained by the royal troops in Turtle Bay at the foot of what is now Forty-seventh Street, captured more military stores, and sent them on to their Massachusetts compatriots encamped at Cambridge. A few days later still, orders arrived for the royalist troops to set sail for Boston.

To their going the Sons of Liberty made no strenuous objection (although some of the more embittered among them favored throwing their old-time rivals in jail), but insisted that they take nothing with them except their personal arms and equipment. The troops, seeking to void this embargo, rustled such additional arms as there were in the fort into neatly covered carts and set out on June 6 for their waiting boats. But Marinus Willett, a leader of the Liberty boys, who was later to be mayor of New York, intercepted the convoy at the corner of Beaver and Broad, grabbed the bridle of the leading horse, and held it until the quickly gathering crowd exposed the villainy of the gun-runners and took away their guns. The latter were subsequently used to equip the first New York troops to join the American army.

Come late June, a certain Colonel George Washington, a country gentleman from Virginia, passed through town on his way to take command of the colonial troops at Cambridge. Colonel Washington's military experience had been limited to frontier fighting against Indians and an occasional Frenchman in Western Pennsylvania. He had won, however, a justifiable reputation for military wisdom—and wisdom in general—by his unsuccessful efforts twenty years before to convince the British commander, Braddock, that the way *not* to fight the American Indian, who had a disgusting habit of hiding with his bow and arrow behind a tree, was to dress up his men in red coats and march them through the forest in column formation.

A year later, after the British troops had evacuated Boston and sailed for Halifax, Colonel, now General, Washington was back in New York, which, he assumed rightly, would be the spot where the British would next strike. He must have known that the city was as indefensible against attack from warships and artillery of the improved 1775 type as it had been in Peter Stuyvesant's day against the ships and guns of that primitive period. Perhaps less defensible, since in August of the previous year the Sons of

Liberty had decided that the guns of the abandoned fort and battery were more dangerous to the inhabitants of Manhattan Toe than they were to an approaching enemy, and had done a fairly good job of removing the lot of them before H.M.S. *Asia,* lying in the harbor, opened fire on them.

Chief sufferer from the bombardment were not the Liberty boys, who succeeded in getting away with all the guns, but old Samuel Fraunces, who lost his roof. The incident is thus described in these verses by Freneau:

> Scarce a broadside was ended 'till another began again—
> By Jove. It was nothing but fire away Flanagan!
> Some thought him saluting his Sallys and Nancys
> 'Till he drove a round shot thro' the roof of Sam Francis.

This affair occurred in the early evening of August 23 and was followed by the midnight flight of President Myles Cooper, already chronicled in these paragraphs. Hamilton had labored valiantly in the gun removal but at eighteen had just enough of the old college spirit in him to feel that in pursuing his old schoolmaster, the Liberty boys were going a little too far. Hence the oration under cover of which Myles, his dignity hopelessly shattered but his skin intact, escaped to the *Asia* and ultimately to Europe.

In spite of the weakness of the city's defenses, which were rendered still weaker by the exploits of the Sons of Liberty, political considerations made it advisable that Washington should make some show of protecting the town and thus put heart into the wavering inhabitants of other settlements along the seaboard. Like most military moves dictated by political expediency, the attempt to defend New York was doomed to disastrous rout. But it did give the city its one moment of Revolutionary glory.

To say that the news from Philadelphia that the Declaration of Independence had been signed was received in New York amid the unanimous plaudits of the people would be to utter a falsehood of which truthful General Washington would certainly not approve. The rich landowners, and many of the socially ambitious merchants allied with them by financial and marital ties, were almost to a man definitely royalist and remained so to the end. Another smaller, but nevertheless powerful, group was

composed of intellectuals who refused to accept and support the will of the majority. Until Washington's final victory over Cornwallis at Yorktown these two groups waged a civil war against the patriot cause which was an even greater menace to ultimate victory than the British army itself. Conspicuous example of this menace was the plot to take the life of the American Commander in Chief during his brief stay in New York, in which the royalist mayor of the city was involved, and from which General Washington was saved only by the prompt and patriotic action of Sam Fraunces' daughter, Phoebe, who was acting as the General's housekeeper.

Added to these openly royalist groups—loyalists they called themselves—were more than the usual number of waverers and turncoats, whose roots in the new country did not go deep enough to hold them on one side or the other, and whose only thought was to get and keep the personal fortunes which were their sole reason for seeking a livelihood so far from their home ties. Such a man was Editor Rivington of *The Gazette,* who was so outspokenly royalist in the prewar era that Isaac Sears and his companions destroyed his press and melted his type into bullets. Rivington resumed publication with a new press of *The Royal Gazette* during the period of British occupation, but when he saw that the colonists were winning, he offered himself to Washington as a spy.

Lastly there was the usual sizable group who signified their unwillingness to fight for their country for various strangely assorted but very familiar reasons. Petitions circulated in the town to gain support for the Declaration uncovered many examples of this type:

"Thomas Gilbert don't sign by reason he don't choose."

"Thomas West don't sign by reason it is a mystery to him."

"John Clark don't sign by no reason he can give."

"Ephraim Arnold don't sign for fear it would fetch him into a scrape."

"Isaac Penrose don't sign for reason he don't choose to fight for liberty and never will."

However, in spite of open opposition, secret treachery, apathy, and evasion, the patriot Jay, backed by the Sons of Liberty and other aroused citizens, succeeded in obtaining prompt ratification

of the Philadelphia Declaration by the New York provincial assembly, and the patriot Washington on the evening of July 9, 1776 presented to the citizens of New York and to history one of the most appealing and revealing pictures of his quality as a leader of men.

For eleven days His Majesty's transports, loaded with more than 30,000 trained professional soldiers, had been gathering in the lower bay. Washington, with less than half that number of green militiamen—untrained, undisciplined, inadequately armed, and led for the most part by officers without military knowledge or experience—could not hope to hold the town against such an invading host advancing under cover of the guns of the world's most puissant men-of-war. Washington knew this. He knew, too, that he personally and the patriot cause in general were in hourly danger of being stabbed in the back by civilian and, it is to be feared, military treachery in the town itself. Nevertheless, he had deployed his forces as best he could: half of them on the Brooklyn end of Long Island under command of General Israel Putnam, the other half at strategic points on Manhattan Island under his own immediate command.

And now when the news of the Declaration's ratification reached him, with that calm courage which made him the only possible leader of an apparently lost cause at Valley Forge, and with that innate love of ceremony which made him, as President, create what amounted to an American court, he ordered his troops wherever they might be to form in hollow squares to hear from the lips of chosen orators the first articulate expression of the rights for which they were fighting. He, himself, on horseback within the hollow square formed in the Fields, gave to the historic scene the benediction which only he could give.

Echoes of the cheering had scarcely died away among the grim, gray walls of the jail, the almshouse, and the prison before the Sons of Liberty, rushing down Broadway to the Bowling Green, had dragged from its pedestal the leaden statue of George III, "Darling of the People." Dignified General Washington sternly disapproved this patriotic vandalism. Like his young friend Hamilton, he thought the Liberty boys were going a little too far. And from an artistic point of view he was probably right, for atrocious as the equestrian statue of the fat young king astride a rearing

charger may have been, it could hardly have been so bad as the atrocity which replaced it, described by the American humorist John Godfrey Saxe as:

> A fountain that looked like a huge tureen,
> Piled high with rocks, and a squirt between.

Realistically, however, the Sons of Liberty had something on their side, for the lead salvaged from the king's paunches and the horse's haunches and adjacent parts provided more than forty thousand badly needed bullets for the ill-equipped patriot army.

But neither forty thousand nor forty million bullets could have saved New York City from the advancing enemy hordes. For the plain truth was that the American volunteers had neither adequate arms with which to shoot nor adequate training in how to shoot what they had. More important still, they lacked commanders sufficiently experienced to tell them when and at what.

Israel Putnam was presumably as good a choice as the harassed Washington could make to command on the Long Island front. On the record he had had more combat experience than Washington himself. But in the battle of Long Island, the first large-scale conflict of the war, he was not only outnumbered but outmaneuvered, and forced back, after much loss of men and materiel, to the perilous harbor edge of Brooklyn Heights. If the Brothers Howe in command of the invaders—Admiral Lord "Dickie" and General Lord "Willie" as they were called by the unawed—had pressed their advantage, they could have captured Putnam and all his men.

As it was, with the help of a harbor fog and every available craft from rowboats to ferries, General Washington, assuming personal command of the flotilla, succeeded in evacuating "Old Put" and every one of his remaining soldiers. It was a masterly job and, in the crowded annals of the Revolution, a too little appreciated one. No matter what Washington's detractors may say, he was a good man at crossing a river.

Leaving Putnam in command on Manhattan Toe with a holding force of about four thousand men, Washington withdrew the bulk of his own forces to the upper reaches of the island in preparation for the evacuation of Manhattan, which was inevitable after the Long Island disaster. Meanwhile he assumed personal

command of a small mobile unit, with which he prepared to fight a delaying action wherever General Howe might land, so as to give Putnam's outfit time to retreat up the island to join the same force. Howe, who was a good general and, but for overcaution to the point of procrastination, might have been a great one, picked Kip's Bay on the East River near the foot of the present Thirty-fourth Street, with the idea of splitting the American army in two and finishing the job he had begun on Putnam more than a fortnight before. Washington was there to meet him, but little good it did him or his cause; for the raw militiamen, unused to battle, broke and ran at the first sight of the redcoats and the first sound of their muskets. Washington, bravely attempting to rally them, was all but captured by the invaders and would have been if one of his aides, seizing the bridle of the General's horse, had not led him forcibly from the field.

There is a pretty story, possibly apocryphal, about how Putnam's escape was facilitated, in spite of the failure of Washington's well-laid plan, by the patriotic guile of the wife and daughters of a wealthy Quaker merchant, who, taking advantage of the absence of their royalist-minded husband and father, waylaid their former friend, General Howe, with an invitation and a prevarication.

"William," quoth the Quaker lady, "alight and refresh thyself at our house."

"I thank you, Mrs. Murray," replied the General, "but I must first catch that rascally Yankee, Putnam."

"Didst thee not hear that Putnam had gone? It is too late to catch him. Thee had better come in and dine."

The General did—and the fare was so good, and the ladies so beautiful, and he and his staff delayed so long that even slow-moving old Israel, lost alike in the mazes of the great city and in the forests beyond, was able to escape with the helpful guidance of a bright young man who knew his Manhattan and whom Manhattan was destined to know. The name was Burr, Aaron, son of the Aaron Burr who, twenty years before, had purchased "a certain Negro Man named Caesar."

Cut off from what was going on in New York harbor by the British soldiers and by the difficulties of penetrating the largely uncharted stretches of upper Manhattan, General Washington

early recognized the necessity of an adequate military intelligence system if he were to know the numbers of the forces arrayed against him and the kind of campaign their commanders were planning to adopt. George Washington's greatnesses of character, together with the fact that most of his early engagements were defeats, have rather obscured his ability as a military strategist. Authorities on such matters, however, although they admit that he had to learn the business from the bottom up and profit by knowledge gained from the mistakes he himself made, grant him a high place in the honor list of the world's generals. In no respect was this more evident than in his reliance on the supposedly modern science of military intelligence or espionage.

From this surprising and entirely praiseworthy trait stems the tragic story of Nathan Hale, the young Connecticut patriot who volunteered to meet his general's need by shedding the uniform of a captain, donning the habiliments of a schoolmaster, crossing to Long Island, and obtaining information from the enemy forces encamped at that point. Having done his job and done it well, and having nearly reached safety, he was recognized presumably by his cousin on General Howe's staff and sentenced without court-martial to be hanged. (A spy was not an espionage agent in those days but just a spy—and treated as such.) Courageous to the last, Hale is said to have uttered on the gallows his immortal paraphrase of Joseph Addison's "What pity is it that we can die but once to save our country." Historians and literary critics agree that the Connecticut "schoolmaster" improved on the original. "I only regret," he said, "that I have but one life to lose for my country."

Bereft of a brave lieutenant and of the valuable information he had acquired, Washington continued to fight many a stout skirmish in the next three months with Howe and his chief lieutenants, Clinton and Cornwallis. But the loss of Fort Washington with three thousand of his best troops, followed within a week by the fall of Fort Lee on the other side of the Hudson, forced him in November 1776 to abandon Manhattan Island to the enemy for the duration of the war.

Thus, less than five months after the flinging of Thomas Jefferson's immortal words to the men in hollow squares on the

Fields, New York had learned—and the Founding Fathers, too—the truth of what Edna St. Vincent Millay, New York's poet laureate, has since said:

> No man, no nation, is made free
> By stating it intends to be.

19

BOOKS HAVE BEEN WRITTEN ABOUT THE WARTIME BLACKOUT on Manhattan Toe during its long period of enemy occupation. The reader who is interested in these happenings grim and gay will, therefore, be able to satisfy his curiosity in many places, but not here.

It would be interesting, of course, to linger over the gaieties and atrocities of these Revolutionary days. We might, if we tried hard, find excuses for the gaieties. After all, since neither the British soldiers nor the American Tories who took part in them were sympathetic with the patriotic cause, why should they be glum because Washington's men were starving and freezing at Valley Forge? Or should they? To find excuses for harsh and brutal treatment of prisoners of war is another matter. Yet Mr. James Lenox Banks, writing in *Valentine's Manual,* points out that many of the stories of cruelty to American prisoners during the Revolution are necessarily based on "tradition founded on the bitter feeling of the day," and even quotes Washington himself as saying that complaints of ill treatment were "mutual" and "frequently urged on each part."

The prisoners, no matter how we may sympathize with them as individuals, had not for the most part figured in the prewar New York story, and the soldiers and their Tory mates were not destined to play a part in the city's future. We are concerned in this chronicle exclusively with the growth of a community on

Manhattan Toe, and the plain fact is that between 1776 and 1783 it not only did not grow, but physically, socially, even spiritually, it shrank, shriveled, almost disappeared. Our business, therefore, would seem to be to look at what was left and see what the returning patriots did about it. And the first thing we should observe is that the ruin that was New York at the end of the Revolution resulted from two quite unrelated causes, enemy occupation and fire.

From September 15, 1776, when Howe landed at Kip's Bay, until September 3, 1783, when George III signed the Treaty of Versailles, and for nearly three months thereafter, the city was occupied continuously by British troops. No other city was held so long. No other city suffered so much. Part of the damage from this royalist occupation was physical because of the use of so many buildings for prisons and the storage of military supplies, and the failure of the invaders to undertake even the most ordinary repairs essential to their upkeep. The greater damage, however, was social and spiritual.

When the enemy forces moved in, the patriotic citizens—some say about 95 per cent of the population—moved out. Most of the men went into the army or government service of some sort; the women, to live with friends and relatives in cities still held by the patriotic army or to stake out claims, with true pioneer spirit, in the neighboring hinterland. Only a few rich Tory families remained.

Then Tories from all over, finding life embarrassingly difficult in their own American-held communities, drifted in to claim the congeniality and protection of royalist rule. They, too, contributed to the physical disintegration of the community by pre-empting the homes of absent patriots and refusing to spend their own money, of which most of them had plenty, on the maintenance of other people's property. More important, they brought to the life of the city the what-the-hell-do-we-care attitude of the irresponsible transient, from which New York and its reputation have always seemed doomed to suffer. When these rich squatters needed extra fuel for their fireplaces, which was often in the bitter winter of 1779–80, they did not hesitate to hack down a girder or joist of the very house in which they were living, rent- and tax-free.

When Cornwallis, ablest of the British generals, surrendered at

Yorktown and the Tories saw the writing on the Revolutionary wall, this temporary population of Manhattan Toe vanished even more rapidly than it had appeared, and took with it the remnant of the old population, the Tory die-hards. Before Washington's triumphant re-entry, some 10,000 of these royalist wrong guessers had fled the city to seek sanctuary in England, Canada, and other parts of the British empire, and as a farewell gesture they had sacked the town. Law, order, and morality, long tottering under the wartime conditions we have been describing, now collapsed.

The great fire of September 21, 1776 had destroyed 490 buildings between the Bowling Green and St. Paul's churchyard, including Trinity Church and most other structures on Broadway and Broad Street, and had laid waste practically all the territory west of Broadway. Nathan Hale, who was captured the next day, was accused without any supporting evidence of having had a hand in it. The true story seems to be that the fire started in a building near Whitehall Street described as "a low groggery" and occupied by "a woman of ill fame," but the canard may have had something to do with the summary nature of Hale's treatment by his captors. In 1778 a second fire, almost as severe as the first, destroyed 300 more buildings in the Pearl Street and Coenties Slip area. Between them the two disasters reduced a fourth of the town to ashes.

Slowly the fourth great mass movement of this seven-year period, the return of the patriots, began. Demobilized soldiers and soldiers' families converged from north, south, and west upon the city, rummaged about among the wreckage for what was left of their homes, faced the problem of rebuilding their lives. Slowly, too, the British soldiers, who had remained as long as possible to cover the retreat of their royalist sympathizers, prepared for embarkation. On November 25, 1783, with much show of "scarlet uniforms and burnished arms," the last regiment departed; and that same day General Washington, accompanied by Governor Clinton and followed by the few hundred tattered and bedraggled veterans which the thrifty Continental Congress had permitted to remain under arms, rode down the Bowery amid the plaudits of an equally tattered and bedraggled people.

The General, who had been biding his time at a point near what is now 125th Street and Eighth Avenue, and whose troops

had been encamped at McGowan's Pass in the northern part of what is now Central Park, well knew that the community he was about to honor by his presence was but an empty husk. But, with that ceremonious dignity which surrounded everything he did, and which was destined to become a steadying and solidifying influence on a new and struggling country, he gave the occasion everything he had. That little group of penniless and in many cases homeless stragglers on Manhattan Toe might have been the beruffed courtiers of Elizabeth's court or the togaed senators of Caesar's Rome, and they would have received no more formal or gracious courtesy. The citizens, themselves, knowing the type of man they were to receive, were roused from the grim contemplation of their individual problems to a full and heartening realization of the significance of his coming. We quote:

> The Committee appointed to conduct the Order of receiving their Excellencies Governor Clinton and General Washington,
>
> Beg Leave to inform their Fellow-Citizens, that the Troops, under the Command of Major-General Knox, will take Possession of the City at the Hour agreed on, Tuesday next; as soon as this may be performed, he will request the Citizens who may be assembled on Horseback, at the Bowling-Green, the lower End of the Broad-Way, to accompany him to meet their Excellencies Governor Clinton and General Washington, at the Bull's Head, in the Bowery—the Citizens on Foot to assemble at or near the Tea-water-Pump at Fresh-water.
>
> ORDER OF PROCESSION
>
> A Party of Horse will precede their Excellencies and be on their flanks—after the General and Governor, will follow the Lieutenant-Governor and Members of the Council for the temporary Government of the Southern Parts of the State—The Gentlemen on Horse-back, eight in Front—those on Foot, in the Rear of the Horse, in like Manner. Their Excellencies, after passing down Queen-Street, and the Line of Troops up the Broad-Way, will alight at Cape's Tavern.
>
> The Commitee hope to see their Fellow-Citizens, conduct themselves with Decency and Decorum on this joyful Occasion.

Who dares underestimate the effect of that formal entry upon the tired and discouraged men and women on Manhattan Toe,

or how much it strengthened their determination to rebuild the city's life and their own? But Washington had personal qualities greater even than dignity, which must have had an incalculably inspiring effect on those young men, who, like his secretary and aide, Alexander Hamilton, were to become leaders in New York's miraculous resurgence. These qualities he showed nine days later, when, at noon on December 4, 1783, in the long room of Sam Fraunces' Tavern there occurred that memorable scene which Colonel Benjamin Talmadge, who was present, has described in his memoirs with such heartfelt fervor for the benefit of all later history writers and history readers:

> After partaking of a slight refreshment in almost breathless silence, the general filled his glass with wine, and, turning to the officers, said, "With a heart full of love and gratitude I now take leave of you. I most devoutly wish that your latter days may be as prosperous and happy as your former ones have been glorious and honorable." After the officers had taken a glass of wine, the general added, "I cannot come to each of you, but shall feel obliged if each of you will come and take me by the hand." General Knox, being nearest to him, turned to the commander-in-chief, who, suffused in tears, was incapable of utterance, but grasped his hand, when they embraced each other in silence. In the same affectionate manner, every officer in the room marched up to, kissed and parted with his General-in-Chief.... Not a word was uttered to break the solemn silence that presided or to interrupt the tenderness of the scene.... But the time of separation had come, and waving his hand to his grieving children around him, he left the room... and walked silently on to Whitehall, where a barge was waiting. We all followed in mournful silence to the wharf, where a prodigious crowd had assembled to witness the departure of the man who, under Gŏd, had been the great agent in establishing the glory and independence of these United States. As soon as he was seated, the barge put off into the river, and when out in the stream, our great and beloved general waved his hat and bade us a silent adieu.

20

THE MEN OF MANHATTAN TOE WERE NOT SUPERMEN. AS WE GO on into the period of so-called robber barons and financial colossi, we shall find that they never have been. In 1783, in 1869, in 1893, in 1907, in 1929, they proved themselves very human human beings. In the crisis which they faced after the Revolution they had working *for,* and *with* them, as their descendants and successors have always had, great forces of Nature, which, even if they had been cowardly and inept instead of courageous and ingenious, they could only have delayed.

New York, then as now, occupied a choice corner lot at the junction of those two world highways, latitude and longitude, which determine whether the number of passers-by, and therefore the number of possible customers, shall be many or few. Latitude placed it in that cross section of the world where the white race has always prospered. Longitude placed it on the shore of a great bay, at the mouth of a great river, on the edge of a great, rich, undeveloped continent, made it beyond possibility of competition or permanent hindrance the liaison office between European markets and the American hinterland. New York just *had* to prosper, and did. But in 1783 the prospect seemed infinitely remote.

Staggering as was the loss of homes, more cataclysmic still was the loss of the commerce which had supported those homes. Man can, has, lived in ruins, in caves, but man cannot sail the sea without

ships. New York's ships were gone—confiscated, scattered, or sunk. Her docks, unused during the long blockade and unrepaired, were rotting, sagging, useless. Her warehouses—those which had not disintegrated from abuse and neglect—were in ashes. These physical obstacles to a newborn prosperity the men of Manhattan Toe could, and did, overcome. It wasn't an easy job or a quick one. But stone was to be had for the lifting and lumber for the cutting; and men, accustomed to working with their hands in a pioneer country, their minds and their bodies conditioned by years of military training and hardship, were equal to the task. Ships were built, borrowed, hired. Wharves were repaired, replaced. Warehouses sprang in slow-motion Phoenix formation from their ashes. But the problem of the vanished customer was another thing still.

Great Britain, now a foreign country, hampered American shipping with prohibitive tariffs and regulations, and closed its West Indies ports to American trade. The young nation's former allies, France and Spain, sensitive as always to the changing influences of what we now call power politics, closed their ports, too. So did Holland. Pirates quite as effectively closed the Mediterranean ports. Sweden alone was hospitable, but sadly unproductive. In fact every trade route previously traversed by the American merchant marine was closed or hopelessly unprofitable.

It was ginseng, really, that saved the situation for American commerce, laid the foundation for many a great American business and fortune, and re-established New York City as a world trading center. The chances are that not one school child in a thousand ever heard the word or knows what it means. *The Columbia Encyclopedia* assists me in describing it as an "aromatic perennial plant of the genus *Panax,* having yellowish flowers, crimson fruits, and roots that are used by the Chinese as medicine. The scarcity of the Manchurian or Korean species led to the search for a substitute, which was found in the American species *Panax quinquefolium,* native to the Northern States from Maine to Nebraska, now scarce because so much has been dug and exported to China."

That, in not too involved encyclopedic language, is the story of the China trade, which was destined to refill the empty coffers of the New York merchants. Loading their hired, borrowed, and

New York. And farmers from Long Island landed in increasing numbers at the Fly Market with rowboats and scows filled with country produce.

Stages now ran to Albany by way of Bowery Lane and Kingsbridge Avenue to the Hudson River shore line. The direct route up Broadway was still not available. New York regarded other members of the Confederation as foreign countries—the phrases "Imported from Philadelphia" and "Imported from Rhode Island" appeared in current advertisements—but the city, though insular, was not wholly isolated. Stages also ran regularly, but not comfortably, to Philadelphia and Boston. Josiah Quincy of the latter place, an early passenger, thus described the trip:

> The journey to New York took up a week. The carriages were old and shackling, and much of the harness made of ropes. We generally reached our resting place for the night, if no accident intervened, at ten o'clock, and after a frugal supper went to bed with a notice that we should be called at three the next morning, which generally proved to be half-past two. Then, whether it snowed or rained, the traveler must rise and make ready by help of a horn-lantern and a farthing candle, and proceed on his way over bad roads, sometimes with a driver showing no doubtful symptoms of drunkenness, which goodhearted passengers never failed to improve at every stopping place by urging upon him another glass of toddy. Thus we traveled, eighteen miles a stage, sometimes obliged to get out and help the coachman lift the coach out of a quagmire or rut, and arrived at New York, wondering at the ease as well as the expedition of our journey.

The first post office under the new federal government opened in 1783, but letter boxes didn't come for another seventy-five years; most mail was received and business done in taverns. In 1786 appeared the first directory, to which was added "a valuable and well calculated Almanack, tables of the different coins, suitable for any state, and digested in such order as to render an exchange between any of the United States plain and easy." Its compiler, an Irishman with a Jewish name, David Franks, humbly requested that his friends and the public "indulgently excuse any errors, inaccuracies or omissions which may appear, and impute them to the local disadvantages he labored under, in this first attempt."

Trade in real estate was brisk, as will be seen by these newspaper advertisements which appeared in 1786:

> A fine lot of ground on the west side of Broadway, near the old Lutheran Church, is for sale. Enquire of Alexander Hamilton, in Wall Street, No. 58.

> Four or five stables in Wall Street to let, opposite Col. William Livingston's, with stalls for from two to four horses, rooms for carriages, and large lofts for hay.

> To be let, the "Dog and Duck" tavern, in the Bowery Lane, at the two mile stone; the house has eight rooms, with a large garden, and the best bed of asparagus on this island. Enquire at No. 44 Gold Street, opposite the Baptist Meeting-house.

(For the reader who has the time the author recommends a thorough study of newspaper and magazine advertisements through the years. These few brief notices from the press of this post-Revolution period are samples chosen chiefly from the many culled by Mr. Henry Collins Brown for his brave revivals of *Valentine's Manual;* and by far the most complete collection of facsimile illustrated advertisements in American publications from the times of the early colonial printers to those of his high mightiness, Father Day, is to be found in Mr. Carl Crow's *The Great American Customer.* Advertising may not always pay the advertiser, but it invariably pays the student of history who cares more about people than dates.)

Trade in slaves continued on Manhattan Toe in spite of the law of 1758 which promised freedom to children born of parents held in slavery in the province of New York. The device for getting around the law seems to have been the sale of the parent, with the children thrown in, as, for example:

> Isaac Brinckerhoff No. 8 Coenties Slip, has for sale, a likely Negro wench aged 33 years, with her female child, about two years old, also a smart Negro boy, twelve years of age.

The China trade in its original form lasted only briefly. By the late 1780's New York shippers found it easier and more profitable to ship their cargoes to way stations along the route, like Mauritius Island in the Indian Ocean, and there exchange them for tea from the holds of ships of other nations. Slowly the idea of New

York as a port hospitable to *any* ships, instead of just its own, was also emerging. Ships from all countries and all American states came and went, but not without leaving commissions and lawyers' fees and profits of every kind with Manhattan middlemen—a practice which still prevails.

New York's own shipping featured more and more the suburban trade along the Jersey and Connecticut shores. Most ambitious of these commuting ventures were the Providence packets, one of which was described in complimentary terms but with Gallic frankness by M. Brissot de Warville. "The cabin," he wrote, "contained fourteen berths in two tiers, one row above the other. Each berth had its own little window. The cabin was well ventilated and nicely varnished, so you had none of those vile smells which haunt the packets of the English Channel [and still do!]. Two small spaces were cleverly enclosed in the poop to serve as privies."

Merchants and traders were forever forming societies and associations, and giving themselves dinners. The annual banquet of the General Society, heretofore mentioned, was a notable affair, with thirteen toasts to be drunk, one to each of the thirteen states. The various crafts represented in the General Society had their own banquets, too, and their own toasts.

The machine age could scarcely be said to have begun, but inventors were active—notably Christopher Colles, the first man to suggest a practical plan for supplying water to Manhattan Toe and the first to suggest a canal from the Great Lakes to the Hudson. A linseed oil factory near the Collect Pond, was operating by the use of "wind-sails." A fund was raised for the establishment of a textile mill on Vesey Street. By 1788, in every line of commercial endeavor, the postwar boom was definitely booming.

Five years—and New York was once more well on its way.

21

VERY LITTLE HAS BEEN SAID SO FAR IN THIS NARRATIVE ABOUT the position of women in New York's early days, for the reason that they were apparently permitted to say very little for themselves, and the males who did write the few records which have come down to us either ignored or boycotted them as a subject of legitimate historical interest. The press confined its comments almost exclusively to erring sisters; the lighter periodicals, to women of fashion.

In 1783 a certain Miss Rebecca Franks, who was one of the period's very rare feminine commentators, spoke in most uncomplimentary terms of New Yorkers of her own sex: "I don't know a woman or a girl who can chat above half an hour, and that only on the form of a cap, the color of a ribbon, or the set of a hoop." The ladies of Philadelphia, she opined, "have more cleverness in the turn of an eye than those of New York have in their whole composition." (Miss Franks was from Philadelphia.) A visitor from an even more distant point was not altogether charmed by the New York woman of that period. Our old friend, Brissot de Warville, writes, "I saw at dinner, seven or eight women, all dressed in great hats, plumes, etc. It was with pain that I remarked much of pretension in some of these women; one acted the giddy, vivacious; another, the woman of sentiment. This last had many pruderies and grimaces. Two among them had their bosoms very naked. I was scandalized at this indecency among republicans."

The rapid increase in the local marriage and birth rates, however, suggests that New York women of the postwar period must have had something besides "bosoms very naked" to attract the male sex, and the marriage notices in the New York papers struggled hard to describe what that something was. For instance:

> On Monday evening, June 7th, by the Rev. Mr. Beach, JOHN BUCHANAN, Esq., to the amiable, adorable, incomparable, inflexible, invincible and non-parallel of her sex, NANCY LUCY TURNER, both of this city.

Inclusion in this eulogy of the adjectives "invincible" and "inflexible" suggests that at least one male, Mr. John Buchanan, was on notice that women would not long be satisfied with the subordinate role they had hitherto been forced to play in the life of the metropolis.

The war had taken an especially severe toll of the city's cultural life. King's College had succumbed to the emergency and become a military hospital. In 1784, however, having been purged of its royal name, it reopened as Columbia College, and the first student to matriculate was the nephew of that Governor George Clinton who had re-entered New York City with Washington. This young man, DeWitt Clinton, was destined to be twelve times mayor and four times governor, a United States senator, and a candidate for president, builder of the Erie Canal, and, even more than the tragically short-lived Hamilton, New York's "First Citizen."

At his Columbia commencement, according to the account of an eye- and earwitness, young Clinton "spoke a salutatory oration in Latin—*De utilitate et necessitate studiorum Artium Liberalium.*" He was followed on the program by five other students (including one inevitable Livingston) who stood on their rights and stuck to English. "When the above gentlemen, together with Mr. Francis Sylvester, who spoke the valedictory oration, with a dissertation on the Passions, concluded, the graduates received the degree of Bachelor of Arts from the hands of the Rev. Mr. Gross, Professor of Geography, who was appointed to deliver them."

Although the community was apparently convinced by salutatorian Clinton of the *"utilitate et necessitate"* of classical education, it was not so sure about the value or need of a medical

training which involved "the odious practice of digging up and removing, for the purposes of dissection, dead bodies interred in cemeteries of burial places." So when a playful student of the medical school waved a portion of a cadaver out of the window at a group of boys playing in the institution's yard, and the boys had scattered through the town spreading and enlarging the tale wherever they went, a mob tore down on the dissecting room, demolished the equipment. Physicians and students made an escape quite as precipitate as portly Prexy Cooper's in the prewar days, and sought safety in the city jail.

The following morning, April 14, 1788, the mob rushed the jail. Governor Clinton, accompanied by Baron von Steuben, arrived with the militia, whom he ordered to fire, if necessary, on the crowd. Baron von Steuben, who had seen enough bloodshed in his day, was protesting against this hasty action when a brick sailed through the air and knocked him down. When he came to, his first words were said to have been, "Fire, Governor, fire!"

John Jay, dignified Secretary for Foreign Affairs, was another casualty: two black eyes. Finally, the militia did fire, and killed three people, but did not succeed in restoring the prestige of the medical profession. Years passed before the practice of medicine, which had been prospering before the war, recovered from these so-called Doctors' Riots of 1788. Ailing citizens turned more avidly than ever to quack remedies sold, of all places, in newspaper offices. Home remedies recommended by current almanacs, like turnip broth for a cough and cow-dung poultices for a bruise, were also popular.

Sanitary conditions in the town, never too good, were worse than ever following the neglect and devastation of the war years. The City Fathers, not yet ready for large scale public works programs, had turned down Christopher Colles's plan for an early model Croton waterworks and James Rumsey's "Engine far superior to any other for supplying Towns with Water." The twenty-odd thousand people on Manhattan Toe still depended on wells and pumps, with the Tea-water Pump on Chatham Street the only one that produced water which we of this fussy generation would consider fit for a hog to drink.

Animals ran wild in the streets in spite of sporadic efforts to control them. In 1786 appeared this warning: "Those persons

who have Goats, that keep about the Fort Garden, are desired to take notice, that unless they are taken care of, and prevented from destroying the fruit trees, disagreeable consequences will attend them." On the other hand the banishment of hogs from the streets was violently opposed because they were the principal factors in keeping the streets even reasonably clean. The committee of leading citizens to which the matter was finally referred in September, 1786, split six to six, and only the affirmative vote of the presiding officer secured the passage of a resolution "that from & after the first Day of January next no Person or Persons shall permit his or her or their Hogs Shoats or Pigs to go at large in the Streets or Highways of this City under the penalty of forfeiting such Hogs Shoats or Pigs to the use of the Poor of the said city." What really turned the tide against the porkers were not aesthetic considerations one way or the other, but the obvious menace they constituted to the continuing perpendicularity of pedestrians weaving their way home through almost unlighted streets after an evening spent in hospitable taverns.

Travel by any means, on land or water, was still beset with difficulties. Mrs. Aaron Burr wrote her husband on the occasion of his perilous trip to Paulus Hook, now Jersey City, that "every breath of wind whistled terror, every noise at the door was mingled with fear of thy perseverance. . . . A tedious hour elapsed when our son was the joyful messenger of thy safe landing at Paulus Hook." Negotiation of the East River crossing was considered, with some justice, equally perilous—as per this item from the public prints:

> Saturday afternoon, one of the Brooklyne ferry boats, crossing from the city, with Mr. Thorn, Mr. Backhouse, and a servant of his Excellency Don Gardoqui, together with five horses, about half way over, by some accident one of the horses fell to leeward, which threw the rest into great confusion, and the wind being fresh, the boat overset with a heavy sea.

No lives were lost by this upset, since Thorn, Backhouse, and the servant of the Spanish ambassador were picked up by the crew of a French packet, and the horses returned to the shore under their own power. The incident shows, however, that transit in the 1780's was neither rapid nor safe.

There was a plethora of laws and lawmakers, and a sturdy

effort of the reform administration of Mayor Duane to rehabilitate the city from the moral collapse which had accompanied enemy occupation. The task, especially in the burned areas now filling up with squatters' shacks, was a formidable one, and the good mayor was quite justified in saying that "the tranquillity of the inhabitants hath been disturbed by an idle and profligate Banditti who continue to rob and steal in defiance of the vigilance of the Magistrates and the severity of frequent and exemplary Punishments and by other abandoned Vagrants and Prostitutes whom the ordinary Process of Justice hath not awed nor reclaimed." Even the sacrosanct quarters of the Assembly were not free from depredations, if we may judge by this plaintive appeal:

> The Gentleman who took by mistake a new light colour'd drab great coat with pinchbeck buttons, large cape of the same Cloth and flash pockets, from the Assembly room, is desired to return it to the Printer—as the owner finds himself much incommoded by the severity of the weather.

Debtors continued to feel the full weight of the law's heavy hand. It was no uncommon thing for respectable merchants, temporarily short of funds, to be thrown into jail, often, it is suspected, at the instance of their competitors. Even high officials of the government, if caught short, landed behind the bars of their own contriving. Ordinary criminals were fed and heated, though meagerly, at public expense. Debtors, although the reason for their incarceration was lack of money, were required to furnish their own food and warmth. More affluent prisoners could buy liquors from the warden at black market prices and other comforts, if they were so inclined, from a corps of the town's best known prostitutes who conducted business as usual within the prison's walls.

The continued presence in the community of Marie Joseph Paul Yves Roch Gilbert Motier, Marquis de La Fayette, and of Frederick William, Baron von Steuben, and of other Continental Europeans was regarded with some apprehension by the godly. To be sure, these gentlemen had been very useful during the late war, but after all they were "foreigners" and had "foreign" ideas. The French influence was especially feared, partly because it was French and therefore traditionally naughty, and partly because of La Fayette's personal popularity, which made it so powerful,

Although the Marquis spent most of his life in helping to establish democracy here and in his own country, he was what we now call a snappy dresser. So were his fellow countrymen, Vicomte de Noailles, Comte de Grasse, and Comte de Rochambeau, all of whom had fought nobly in the democratic cause.

The example these heroes set to impressionable young bloods of the postwar era resulted in such fantastic costumes as this one, described by its wearer as "a light French-blue coat, with a high collar, broad lapels, and large gilt buttons, a double-breasted Marseilles vest, Nankeen-colored cassimere breeches, with white silk stockings, shining pumps, full ruffles on my breast and at my wrists, together with a ponderous white cravat with a pudding in it, as we then called it; and I was considered the best-dressed gentleman in the room." This extravagance, combined with "the expensive upkeep of women," was already forming "in this town," according even to the Frenchman, Brissot de Warville, "a class of men very dangerous in society—I mean bachelors."

Another alleged sign of moral depravity, horse racing, was becoming a problem. First on Greenwich Lane and later on Bowery Lane, the sport of kings became anathema to those who felt it to be either wicked or cruel. The latter took space in the press to protest:

> O Yes! O Yes!—This is to give notice to all lovers of cruelty and promoters of misery, that yesterday was begun on the Maiden Head race ground, in the Bowery, which will continue for several days to come, the high blood sport of Horse Racing. This cannot but give delight to every breast thoroughly divested of humanity.

Worries about social trends, of course, went deeper than horses' hoofs or best-dressed gentlemen's nankeen pants. There were only two men of stature in the United States, Thomas Jefferson and Thomas Paine, who believed in equality in the modern sense of the word. Neither of them was at the moment in New York, and one of them, Paine, because he didn't believe all the stories in the Old Testament, was considered a liability to the democratic cause. New York's outstanding political figure, Alexander Hamilton, although he believed firmly in what he conceived to be a democratic form of government, was intellectually an aristocrat, and socially, too, especially after his marriage to Elizabeth Schuyler

of the Albany Schuylers. He himself had been born in the Leeward Islands of parents neither financially nor socially affluent, but he adored a society in which, as he put it, "the rich and well-born" should be given "a distinct, permanent share in the government." Whereas his great opponent, Jefferson, himself a descendant of the Randolphs, had long since grasped the futility of perpetuating such social distinctions in a democracy.

Like most wars, the American Revolution produced a military caste, to which most of the leaders of postwar government, having seen military service under Washington, belonged. Outstanding exhibit was the Society of the Cincinnati, formed in 1783 with General Washington as national head. Only officers of the Continental Army were eligible, and only the eldest sons of such officers were eligible for future membership. The *Weekly Post Boy*, reporting the annual July Fourth celebration of the Society in 1786, after noting the fact that, in spite of the traditional thirteen toasts, "the greatest harmony and decorum was observed," stated that "an elegant address suitable to the occasion was delivered by Col. Hamilton."

Hamilton, as a gallant commander of a company of artillery at the battles of Long Island, White Plains, Trenton, and Yorktown, and as aide-de-camp and personal secretary for four years to Washington, was naturally one of the leaders of the New York branch of the Cincinnati. But in spite of his and Washington's sponsorship and its own indubitable "decorum," this organization was regarded with suspicion by many believers in republican principles. John Jay, whose memorable services had been those of a diplomat rather than a soldier, declined with some heat an honorary membership, although he himself had married a Livingston, was allied with the forces of power and wealth, and had summed up his own idea of democracy in the belief that "those who own the country should govern it."

Certainly the laboring man who earned from twenty-five to fifty cents a day didn't own it any more than the slaves did. And there is no evidence that the authorities, state or federal, intended to do anything to relieve this situation—nankeen pants and four meals a day in Wall and Cherry Streets on the one hand; linsey-woolsey suits and dresses, rotting food and almost no fuel in a cellar or garret of Topsail Town on the other.

America had to wait nearly a hundred and fifty years, and New York had to wait with it, for Abraham Lincoln to expound the true meaning of democracy. "As I would not be a slave, so I would not be a master," he wrote. "That expresses my idea of democracy. Whatever differs from this, to the extent of the difference, is no democracy." Judged by this standard, or any other standard which men of good will now accept, New York in the 1780's was no democracy.

Yet, in its blind stumblings, it was going that way. By its enactment of the first state constitution in 1777 and the enabling acts of 1784—nearly three-quarters of a century after the theoretical establishment of religious freedom in Governor Cornbury's time—New York at last realized *in practice* the cherished American ideal of freedom of worship. In 1785 the cornerstone of St. Peter's, the first Catholic church on Manhattan Toe, was laid at the junction of Barclay and Church Streets; and eight years later, by the election of Francis Cooper, a Catholic, to the assembly, the right of members of that faith to vote and to hold public office was *de facto* confirmed.

Meanwhile, in Philadelphia, the mountainous minds of the Founding Fathers had labored and brought forth that constitution, which, with about a score of amendments and one noteworthy repeal, has brought us as close to a real democracy as there exists in this troubled world today. Of more immediate import to the citizens on Manhattan Toe, however, was the news, which they heard with great surprise and some dismay, that New York City had been chosen as the first capital of the new republic.

Why this choice was made is not yet clear. Philadelphia was the larger and more centrally located city. Besides, it had the all-important nine points of possession. Some say it was because Col. Hamilton delivered another "elegant address suitable to the occasion." Others say the congressmen were vexed at Ben Franklin for printing so radical and, on the whole, so ribald a publication as his *Saturday Evening Post*. The real reason, New Yorkers suspect, was neatly put by Senator Maclay, himself a Pennsylvanian, when he confessed, "The allurements of New York are more than ten to one compared with Philadelphia."

Anyhow, New York was tagged and, for a year and four months, it remained the capital.

22

CHIEF TOPIC OF CONVERSATION AMONG THE FOUNDING FATHERS assembled in New York during the spring of 1789 was whether the President-elect, who was approaching from his Virginia home by exceedingly easy stages—and sleeping in all those beds!—should be addressed as His Serene Highness or just plain His Highness. Washington himself was said to favor the old Dutch title of High Mightiness. A committee appointed by the Senate to investigate the matter suggested His Highness the President of the United States and Protector of their Liberties. There was talk, also, of erecting a throne for him in the Senate chamber, and a strong movement among officers of the late army, led by Colonel Lewis Nicola, to call him King George I, and be done with it.

Support for this aping of royalty came from the most unexpected quarters. John Adams, who, with his fellow Bostonian Samuel, had led the patriots in the Continental Congress in attacks on all things kingly, but who now found himself second in line for the job of national head man, strongly favored a higher-sounding title than President on the alleged ground that there were "presidents of fire companies and cricket clubs." Politician Hamilton, however, ranged himself for once on the side of a policy less likely to disturb those members of the electorate who thought they had fought and voted for a democracy. Fun-loving Senator Ralph Izard further pricked Adams' bubble by suggesting His Rotundity

as a suitable title for the Vice-President. So Boston John, when he bustled forth with much fidgeting and strutting to greet his boss on the occasion of the latter's inauguration, compromised on "sir." And Chancellor Livingston, after administering the oath on the balcony of Federal Hall in the presence of a "vast throng" gathered on Broad and Wall Streets, settled the matter for all time by shouting:

"Long live George Washington, President of the United States!"

According to Thomas Jefferson, Washington never became reconciled to so paltry a title, and when his major-domo, Humphreys, announced him as such upon his entrance at his first official levee, "the President was so much disconcerted by it that he did not recover in the whole time of the levee; and when the company was gone, he said to Humphreys, 'Well, you have taken me in once, but, by God, you shall never take me in a second time.' "

The presidential levees were formidable affairs, at which, according to Senator Maclay's famous diary, one had "to be clean shaved, shirted and powdered, to make your bows with grace, and to be master of small chat on the weather, play or newspaper anecdote of the day." The Senator thought this sort of thing boded very ill for the nation. "Republicans," he grumbled, "are borne down by fashion and a fear of being charged with want of respect to General Washington. If there is treason in the wish I retract it, but would to God this same General Washington were in heaven! We would not then have him brought forward as a constant cover to every irrepublican act!"

These grumblings are important to this story, not alone because they subsequently grew into a roar, first against the aristocratic principles for which Washington stood and then against Washington himself, but because they were still another factor that marked New York City in the eyes of the nation at the very beginning of the nation's life with that high society, "foreign," or at least un-American stigma which, rightly or wrongly, it has never lost.

But in 1789 few visitors to New York felt so strongly about these matters as gouty Senator Maclay or expressed their feelings so sourly. Even Jefferson, as we have seen, attended the levees without rancor and sat through the interminable un-Jeffersonian dinners. The President, who had lived first in the Franklin house

on Cherry Street, soon moved to the McComb mansion at what is now 39 Broadway, and increased rather than decreased that "splendor and majesty" of his way of life. The social migration from Pearl Street to Broadway and Wall was now complete. This section was regarded as the "Court end" of the city. Secretary of State Jefferson lived farther uptown at 57 Maiden Lane, but Hamilton, now Secretary of the Treasury, lived appropriately enough at 58 Wall, Secretary of War Knox in lower Broadway in a big brick house with a garden running down to the Hudson, and John Adams quite manorially at Richmond Hill in Greenwich Village.

The wife of the President was ex officio the social leader of the court, but a reluctant and admittedly bored one. "I lead a very dull life here [in the McComb mansion]," she wrote, "and know nothing that passes in the town ... I am a state prisoner," she continued, and "as I cannot do what I like, I am obstinate and stay at home a great deal." Obviously Martha Washington was a victim of her own and the community's belief that the first business of a First Lady is to stay put—an idea which has sometimes been challenged in our day.

Which reminds the author, for no good reason, that he has again been remiss in keeping the reader abreast of the Rooseveltian multiplication tables. Births last noted were those of Jacobus (T.R. division) in 1724 and of Isaac (F.D.R. division) in 1726. The two brothers were great-great-grandfathers of the Roosevelt Presidents. In 1759, on the 150th anniversary of Hudson's conquest with the *hackhack,* Jacobus I begat great-grandfather Jacobus II, and in the following year Isaac begat great-grandfather James. And to be forewarned as to future events, it may be well to record right now that in 1790, James (the F.D.R.'s finishing first under the wire for the first time) begat Isaac II, who was the Roosevelt who emigrated from Manhattan Toe to Hyde Park, and Jacobus II begat Cornelius, who stayed on the Toe and became one of the founders of the Chemical Bank. These last two were the grandfathers.

The real leader of court society in President Washington's day, with an occasional assist from Elizabeth Schuyler Hamilton, was Sarah van Brugh Livingston Jay, wife of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, described by the admiring Mr. Wilson as "a

woman of exceptional grace and loveliness of person, said by her friends so to resemble Marie Antoinette as to be once mistaken for the queen by the audience of a theatre in Paris, who on the entrance of the American beauty rose to do her homage." The town house of the Jays at what was then 133 Broadway was quite the show place of the town, "and in its pleasant rooms again and again assembled the gay and gallant folk whose names lend lustre to the annals of the first republican court."

Another prime center of gaiety was the residence of the French Minister, Comte de Moustier, who wore earrings and red-heeled shoes, whose sister-in-law hostess, Madame la Marquise de Brehan, was notable, among other things, for the possession of a monkey. (The French influence was still strong. Chateaubriand informs us that even the Iroquois Indians had a French dancing master, M. Violet.) Madame la Marquise, however, was not overpopular with the more conservative ladies of the community. They admitted that in her public entertainments she "exhausted every resource," as she claimed, to put on a show worthy of France. What did not seem quite in accord with the accepted standards of a republican court was the alleged fact that "she was sleeping with the French Minister."

General Washington, although doubtless shielded from these cruder facts of life, seems to have enjoyed the capital's social gaiety much more than did his officially imprisoned wife. He is recorded as having attended the 1789 Dancing Assembly, at which he stepped out for a minuet with Mrs. James Maxwell, a cotillion with Mrs. Peter van Brugh Livingston, and another cotillion with Mrs. Alexander Hamilton. He also went a-picnicking on the lawn of the Jumel Mansion with Jefferson, Adams, Hamilton, and General Knox, the latter now so fat that he was believed to contain his bulk only by the stiffest stays, which must have added considerably to his discomfort on a picnic, at best a none too comfortable affair. A great traveler, as every American guidebook knows, General Washington was continually riding about the island in his "imported canary-colored state coach, shaped like a half-pumpkin, ornamented with cupids, festoons, and flowers, emblazoned with the family coat of arms, and drawn by four white horses," or paying formal calls on horseback, his favorite mode of locomotion.

A year or two before his death Washington Irving told George Haven Putnam, then a youngster, that when he, Irving, was being wheeled along in a perambulator by his nurse, they encountered the General on horseback at the corner of Pearl Street and Broadway. " 'My nurse told me afterwards,' said the old gentleman, 'that the General lifted me in his arms up to the pommel of his saddle and bestowed upon me a formal blessing (by laying his hand upon the head)!' I looked with reverential awe," wrote Mr. Putnam in *Valentine's Manual,* "at the head that had been touched by the first President and was puzzled when the old gentleman said, 'Haven, you will not see the spot that Washington touched.' I did not venture to put the question to Irving, but had word later with my father. 'You goose,' said my father, 'did you not know that Irving wears a wig?' "

Since Washington Irving was born in 1783, he would have been, in 1789, a big boy to be riding around in a perambulator, so that the incident must have occurred during one of Father Washington's earlier visits to the city, but it does show that he did ride horseback through the streets of New York and that he was a nice, kind man.

The General also enlivened the Manhattan scene as a walker. Attired in colorful coat and waistcoat, black silk smallclothes and cocked hat, he frequently took an afternoon stroll on the Battery, but not, we must believe, for the ogling and flirting purposes to which that now peaceful promenade was chiefly devoted. Of an evening, if the play was good, he would attend the little playhouse on John Street, which the Continental Congress once closed "because, as rumor went, the Boston representatives were fearful lest the morals of the Americans would be weakened by play-acting," but which the British reopened during the war as the Theatre Royal, and which had now reverted to its original, simply declarative title of The Theatre. The leading lady, in Washington's time, was a Mrs. Morris, who was so bewitching and so pursued that "she had a gate made from her lodgings in Maiden Lane to enable her to run across John Street and into the theatre, without walking through Broadway and exposing herself to the gaze of the beaux."

Between levees and picnics, dinners and dances, rides and strolls, and an occasional snatch of drama, the General managed to find

time to sign papers, accept freedoms of cities, confer with his colleagues (to the end of keeping the more rambunctious among them hewing to the party line), to make speeches appropriate to all occasions like this one of January 1, 1790: "Whatever changes take place in New York in the future never forget the cordial, cheerful observance of New Year's Day," and to sit for an impressive number of impressive portraits.

23

IF THIS BRIEF ACCOUNT OF NEW YORK IN ITS VINTAGE YEAR SUGgests a lot of little boys playing around with their new toy, American independence, and dressing up for charades on a national stage, the boys should not be too harshly judged. Their games might have been much rougher. We in America think of the year 1789 as the beginning of constitutional government—and rightly—but the world thinks of it as the beginning of the French Revolution. By comparison, we must admit, our boys of 1789 handled themselves with commendable restraint. We should be grateful that this birth of a nation, under the most critical examination and in its least commendable manifestations, was not a bath of blood but the kind of high jinks which invariably follow victory.

The temptation to linger over these doings is almost irresistible. But like the prisoners who died and the Tories who gamboled during the British occupation, few of these glittering figures, except Hamilton and Jay and Burr, belonged in the New York story or exercised any direct influence on its plot. Gay, charming, distinguished, and funny though they were, they live in this narrative, except for the impress which their temporary presence left upon the town, in a historical vacuum, which might be described as the American occupation of New York.

Our concern is with what was left of "the place where we all got drunk," when, like the Arabs, the Founding Fathers folded

their tents and, unlike the Arabs, went to Philadelphia. For us it is New York time that marches on.

The least tangible, but perhaps the most important and the most lasting imprint left by the city's brief tenure of what Washington called "the Seat of the Empire" was the transmuting of the town's hitherto solely racial cosmopolitanism into a social and intellectual one.

Washington's personality was, as we have seen, the dominant factor on the social side, or seemed to be. How far Washington was himself responsible for rousing the resentment of pepper-and-salters like Maclay against the town and against himself, and how far he was used by others cannot now be established. Such matters are invariably off the record. Certainly his initial idea was to form a nonpartisan government, in which the Republicans led by Jefferson and the Federalists led by Hamilton should have equal say; otherwise he would not have made the former his secretary of state and the latter his secretary of the treasury. His personal tastes, however, were all on the side of formality and show, and his personal affection was all with his friend and former secretary, Hamilton. The only interest he is known to have shared with Jefferson was architectural.

On the intellectual side, the temporary presence of distinguished and literate Europeans at the world's first republican court undoubtedly had an influence. We may differ as to how much the Duc de Montpensier or the Comte de Beaujolais or Louis Philippe himself contributed to the "tides of world culture." It is indubitably true, however, that the influx from every direction of exiled intellectuals curious to examine a new scheme of life in the first year of its official living, did make New York different not only from Boston but from every other American city, and has, for better or worse, helped to make it stay that way. Incidentally, the presence of these otherwise homeless individuals marked New York for what it always has been and still is, a city of exiles.

Inhabitants of Manhattan Toe benefited in many more tangible ways from their regal year. First of all, there had been a hasty washing of the town's face. City Fathers, hitherto callous to mud and muck, were moved to order parts of certain streets—among them Pearl, Water, Church, Cortlandt, Barclay, Fulton, Vesey, and Greenwich—paved in the bumpy manner of the times. But

even in the vintage year, Monaghan and Lowenthal tell us, in their brilliant book *This Was New York,* that "the streets could be divided into paved, being paved, and never paved. It was hard to judge which were the worst. In the few that were paved, the two-foot sidewalks were interrupted by trees, pumps, hitching posts, stairs, stoops, open gates, refuse piles, and low projecting bay windows; the roadway slanted from the curbs to a central sunken gutter clogged with sewage and filth, and its ancient cobblestones sprawled in anything but a sweet disorder." Contemporary accounts were even more explicit.

Fortunately, the garbage piles of the late 1700's were limited in quantity, if unlimited in quality. Statisticians tells us that if all the garbage collected in New York today were dumped into one pile, it would reach as high as the Empire State Building. Any such perfumed pyramid, if scattered about New York's "genteel, delicate and sweet-smelling avenues," would doubtless be more than even post-Revolution Manhattanites would have been willing to leave to "sun, rain, wind, and hogs."

Yes, the hogs were still there, in spite of the Common Council's pious resolution, and other animals as well, as may be seen from this 1802 newspaper item:

MELANCHOLY ACCIDENT

Cow Gores Citizen in Beekman Street

On Thursday afternoon a man of genteel appearance was passing along Beekman street, he was attacked by a cow and notwithstanding his endeavors to avoid her and the means he used to beat her off, we are sorry to say that he was so much injured as to be taken up for dead.

Nevertheless, there must have been some improvement in the city's always troublesome transit problem, for it was a real fear that, with royalty gone, the town would revert to its former condition that was voiced by the incorrigible Philip Freneau, America's first authentic poet:

Our streets that were just in a way to look clever
Will now be neglected and nasty as ever,
Again we must fret at the Dutchified gutters
And pebble-stone pavements that wear out our trotters.

Merchants, we know, profited greatly by navigation laws which implemented American shipping and made unprofitable European dumping on our shores. General business prospered. Receipts of the New York City post office for the final three months of 1789 reached the huge total of $1,067.08. Real estate values soared. The corner lot at Wall and Broad, on which the House of Morgan now stands, changed hands at the unprecedented price of $1,125.

The money-changers do not seem to have profited directly by the brief presence of the republican court. Most of the visitors' money went for show. But the prestige of being the nation's capital undoubtedly added to the advantages offered by the nation's finest harbor and most convenient avenue of trade. Wall Street became the town's financial center and the country's. The principal brokers, who had hitherto consummated their hit-or-miss transactions in bars and grills, especially in the Tontine Coffee House, which had succeeded the Merchants' as the town's toniest tavern, now conducted their business according to strict rules imposed by the newly founded Stock Exchange.

The founders' agreement, signed May 17, 1792 by twenty-four brokers who met under a buttonwood tree in front of what is now 60 Wall, read as follows: "We the subscribers, brokers for the purchase and sale of public stock, do hereby solemnly promise and pledge ourselves to each other that we will not buy or sell from this day, from any person whatsoever, any kind of public stock at a less rate than one-quarter per cent commission on the special value, and that we will give a preference to each other in our negotiations." A seat on the Exchange, which brought $625,000 in early 1929, sold for $25 in early 1789. Speculation on matters other than stocks was not forbidden, as noted in the records of one of the original members: "February 13, 1795, I bet G. McEvers Ten Drs. to Five Drs. that there would not be 3,000 votes taken at the ensuing election in the City and County of New York."

In most things the years between the going of the national government and the coming of the new century conformed to no discernible pattern. The absent Congress occasionally reached back and imposed some new obligation on the former "Seat of the Empire": for instance, compulsory military service of all males between eighteen and forty-five, said males to furnish their

own equipment. For the most part, however, the national salons, busy with their interminable disputes between Federalists and Republicans or Democrats—terms which were then, more frankly than now, interchangeable—left Manhattan Toe to shift for itself.

But unfortunately the City Fathers showed no more concern than the Founding Fathers had for political or sociological progress. There were continuing sneers at demands for political equality from citizens in the lower wage brackets. Only the propertied could vote, which meant that about 10 per cent of the male population might, and a much smaller per cent actually did.

Meanwhile, the City Fathers did themselves well whenever the occasion arose to commemorate a national achievement. In 1796 "the Honorable the Corporation of the City of New York had a gay time on the 10th Anniversary of July 4, 1786. John Corre's catering bill for the officials' celebration was for: 100 gallons of punch £75.; 130 bottles of wine £32.10; cheese and crackers £20, and 10 pounds' worth of broken and missing wineglasses, tumblers, bowls, decanters, plates, bottles and pewter mugs."

Taxes, after such necessary expenses as the above were defrayed, yielded little for policing and fire protection, let alone public improvements. The rich property owners, who decided what the taxes should be, could hardly be expected to make the levy too onerous. The choice corner lot at Broadway and Rector Street—so named because a rector of Trinity Church once lived there—was assessed at $600 and taxed $4.66. The total amount collected from all the property owners on Broadway came to less than $900.

Aesthetically, these conditions were temporarily beneficial, since they induced wealthy citizens to replace the shanties, which had gone up on both sides of lower Broadway after the 1776 fire, with handsome residences. The tax book for 1793 revealed as Broadwayites such well-known names as Gracie, Delafield, Livingston, McComb, Lawrence, Varick, and, of course, Jay. These were soon joined by such neighbors as Alexander Hamilton, Nicholas Low, Peter Jay Morris, and Josiah Ogden Hoffman. Farther uptown, near the Fields, in the block where the Woolworth Building now looms, lived Rufus King, Walter Rutherford, Cornelius Roosevelt, and Aaron Burr.

Law courts as well as lawmakers still were kindly to the well to do. Fines weren't heavy, and those who could pay them were let off.

no matter how serious their offenses; those who couldn't pay them, and that meant most people, were thrown in jails. Debtors, even distinguished ones, still got the same treatment. Dickens' day was not yet dawned. William Duer, British-born aide-de-camp to Lord Clive in India, later assistant secretary of the treasury under Hamilton, whose descendants have graced the social, legal, and literary history of New York, was no exception to the general rule: when he went under in the panic of 1792, he was immediately imprisoned and spent most of his remaining years in jail. (This practice was not peculiar to New York. In Philadelphia, Robert Morris, a signer of the Declaration of Independence and, with the aid of his patriotic Jewish assistant, Haym Salomon, the man who financed the American Revolution, was rewarded, when his private business suffered through his devotion to public service, with nearly four years in a debtors' prison.)

More understandable, but possibly no more just, was the legal procedure in petty quarrels, such as that of John Winnick and Jane Hutchinson, as a result of which the lady accused the gentleman of having raised his foot and "planted it firmly at or near her middle posterior." Winnick got off on his plea that "it was sometimes necessary to be firm with obstreperous females."

Luna Park had not yet flashed its rococo glories on the lower Bay, but the British Empire and the newborn French Republic in 1793 combined to stage a show off Sandy Hook which, so it is said, attracted "hundreds of excursionists": a battle between the British frigate *Boston* and the French frigate *Ambuscade,* which resulted in much bloodshed for the participants and much entertainment of a gruesome sort for the innocent bystanders.

In 1798 the Park Theatre was built on the far side of the Fields, on the plot now covered by Numbers 13 to 21 Park Row, for the staging of less sanguinary entertainments. This playhouse, twice burned and once restored, was to be the equivalent of a later New York's Empire Theatre for a full half-century. Here Edmund Kean was to strut his fiery stuff, the elder Wallack and the elder Booth to start their illustrious careers, and Edwin Forrest, "Fabulous Forrest," to bellow some of his loudest bellowings.

Politically, New York had divided after the Revolution, as had the country, between Hamiltonian Federalists and Jeffersonian

Democrats. Picturesque stronghold of the former was the Society of the Cincinnati, so blatantly undemocratic that Senator-diarist Maclay dismissed its members with the phrase, " 'Tis probable that the whole body of them will soon be demanding pensions to support their titles and dignity."

A rival society, still not much more than a social club, called "The Sons of Tammany," was accused variously, according to the accuser's political bias, of aping or ridiculing the Cincinnati's ritual. Authorities agreed, however, that this new group was primarily not political, but patriotic; and the conclusion is amply supported by its early activities, chief of which, like most patriotic organizations of the period, was the giving of dinners.

Founded by a man named Mooney, whose name has a familiar Celtic ring to those of us who know the Society's subsequent history, the organization did not draw its early strength from any one group. On its rolls appeared the names of Cadwalladers, Morris', Whartons, Livingstons, van Cortlandts, even a Biddle. And the song sung when these old boys got together bears out the presumption of patriotic intent. It was not the "Tammany, Tammany, swamp 'em, swamp 'em, get the wampum," which has inspired many a more recent wigwam gathering, but this indisputably patriotic dirge:

> Sacred's the ground where Freedom's found,
> And Virtue stamps her name;
> Our hearts entwine at Friendship's shrine
> And Union fans the flame:
> Our hearts sincere
> Shall greet you here,
> With joyful voice
> Confirm your choice.
> Et-hoh! Et-hoh! Et-hoh!

In 1790, before the national government decamped, that old halter-holder and horse-stopper, Marinus Willet, used a band of Tammanyites, suitably feathered, to lure another band of real Indians to the executive mansion in New York for a talk with the Great White Father; and Father Washington, playfully desiring to see the effect on the "savages" of two representations of himself, one in person and the other on canvas, showed them

Trumbull's famous portrait. The Indians took one look and said, "Ugh!" Beyond this incident, Tammany did not figure largely on the political scene until the election of 1800, in which Aaron Burr, by adroit manipulation of Mooney's braves, very nearly maneuvered Thomas Jefferson out of the Presidency of the United States.

In the same year, a contemporary observer remarked: "Physicians and doctors of divinity have declared that the scanty clothing prescribed by fashion (for females) is unhealthful, but do they not speak to deaf ears? What doctor, be he D. D. or M. D., could outweigh a fashion book?"

New York was getting on.

24

MUCH OF THE POSTWAR GROWTH OF THE COMMUNITY ON Manhattan Toe was due to immigration. And the most notable of all the immigrants was indubitably Jacob Ashdour, who, in an incredibly brief time, was to receive and deserve the title of "The Landlord of New York."

An attempt has been made in more recent times by William Waldorf Astor, father-in-law of the present Lady Astor, to prove that titles were nothing new in the Ashdour or Astor family. But the Jacob, who later called himself John Jacob, Astor who landed on American soil in 1784 with twenty-five dollars in money and seven flutes from his uncle's music store in London was a self-made man.

He may have been, as the socially ambitious William Waldorf said, descended by a long succession of Astors and Astorgs "from Pierre d'Astorg, Seigneur de Noaillac in Limousin, who could trace his lineage to Pedro d'Astorga, a knight of Castile, who fell at the taking of Jerusalem in 1100." But when he left Waldorf, or Wald Dorf, the Village in the Wood, he was plain Jacob Ashdour, the son of a none too prosperous German butcher, to whose trade he had been somewhat unwillingly apprenticed.

Jacob Ashdour, the German butcher boy, had learned to look on America as the land of opportunity. His brother, Heinrich, who had preceded him, had done well. He had built up a first-class butcher business of his own and had married happily. Jacob

married quite as well, and financially did even better. His conduct and his record for the first fifteen years of his residence in America were the conduct and the record of many another industrious immigrant of German birth.

When he opened his first place of business in his adopted country, having acquired a modicum of English, along with his seven flutes, while clerking for his uncle in London, and having served his time as baker's boy peddling his employer's wares in the streets of New York, he had acquired also the name Astor. He was, however, still merely Jacob Astor, as can be seen from his first advertisement, which appeared in the *New York Packet* under date of May 22, 1786:

> Jacob Astor, No. 81 Queen Street, Two doors from the Friends' Meeting House, has just imported from London an elegant assortment of musical instruments, such as Piano Fortes, spinets, guitars; the best of violins, German flutes, clarinets, hautboys, fifes; the best Roman violin strings and all other kinds of strings; music boxes and paper, and every other article in the musical line, which he will dispose of for very low terms for cash.

Two years and a half later the young man's business progress, and to some extent his social progress, was attested by another advertisement in the same medium. Now he was, as you see:

JOHN JACOB ASTOR
At No. 81 Queen Street,
Next door but one to the Friends'
Meeting House,
Has for sale an assortment of
Piano Fortes of the Newest Construction,
made by the best makers in
London, which he will sell at
reasonable terms.
He gives cash for all kinds of Fur
And has for sale a quantity of Canada
Beavers and Beavering Coating, Racoon
Skins, and Racoon Blankets,
Muskrat Skins, etc., etc.

In the same year that this second advertisement appeared, 1789, John Jacob Astor made his first investment in New York real

estate: two lots on Bowery Lane, for which he paid about six hundred and twenty-five dollars. From this small beginning sprang the Astor empire of a reputed four hundred and fifty million dollars.

Jacob Ashdour found New York a town which was ideally suited to the type of trading and acquisition in which he was to become expert. Times were hard. But depressions have ever been fruitful fields for men skilled in buying at bottom levels and holding for the inevitable rise. Such conditions were ideal for land-hungry John Jacob Astor, and in 1790 he began to get really busy.

The generally accepted theory among Astor historians is that the original John Jacob invested some two million dollars in New York real estate. And this theory was, in all probability, a correct one. But two million dollars! That was a large amount of money for those days, especially for a newly arrived youthful immigrant.

So how did John Jacob get that first two million to invest? Fur trading? Well, there were plenty of fur traders on the Atlantic seaboard in Jacob Ashdour's time, and none of them had two million, or one. As late as 1830 there probably wasn't *any* man or woman in all New York, except Astor, who had a million dollars.

Another explanation of this extraordinary situation, namely, that the first John Jacob Astor "inherited" Captain Kidd's hidden treasure, has been characterized by Astor historians as "a magnificent hoax," and is generally accepted as such. It has a place, however, even as a hoax, in any story of Manhattan Toe if only because it concerns the ownership of a large portion of Manhattan Island.

That Captain Kidd must have left the larger part of his treasure somewhere along the Atlantic coast—probably with the idea of keeping it safe until he should find out just where he stood on the charges which had been lodged against him—would seem to be, on the record, an inevitable conclusion: so inevitable that a commission of experts representing the British government at the time of Captain Kidd's trial and hanging in 1701 spent months in a vain attempt to decipher their only clue to the treasure's whereabouts—a small piece of pasteboard which Kidd, after a

whispered conference, had been seen handing to his wife. This card bore these hastily scribbled figures: 44106818. Not much, to be sure, these cryptic figures, on which to base a search for buried gold. But over a period of two centuries this undeciphered and apparently undecipherable cipher had been enough to cause hundreds of otherwise sober-minded persons to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars digging and drilling on almost every likely spot from Nova Scotia to Key West.

Among those who had wondered, and perhaps laughed, over these legends was Mr. Frederick Law Olmsted, who, besides being the hereditary owner of an island on the Maine coast, was in 1892 a man to whom it was as natural to dig as it is for most men to breathe. As a young man he had dug up eight hundred acres in the heart of Manhattan and made them into beautiful Central Park. He had dug up Capitol Hill in Washington and created a landscape setting which, like the Capitol itself, has been the admiration of all nations. In short, by digging and its kindred arts he had made himself recognized as his country's greatest landscape architect. But he never dreamed that his most notable digging, and perhaps his most profitable, was to be done in his own back yard.

In fact it was probably more in the spirit of good clean fun than in the expectation of either fame or fortune that Olmsted had proposed to his children, one summer afternoon in 1892, that he and they should dig for buried treasure in a cave on the Olmsted estate at Deer Isle, Maine.

Imagine the excitement of these youngsters, and Mr. Olmsted's own surprise, when they found plainly marked on the otherwise smooth clay surface of the bottom of the hole they had dug the impressions of a rectangular row of boltheads, some three or four inches apart and about one inch from the outside edge. The bottom of the hole and such portions of the sides as had not been marred by the removal of the box it had obviously contained were heavily coated with iron rust.

This was the situation until the summer of 1894, when Professor David Todd, an astronomer at Amherst College, who was visiting the Olmsteds at Deer Isle, amused himself one day by calculating the latitude and longitude of their island. Mr. Olmsted's daughter Marian was struck by the fact that the figures

of the latitude, 44° 10′, were identical with the first four figures on the famous Captain Kidd card, 4410; and that the longitude, 68° 13′, was almost the same as the last four figures, 6818. This difference, as Professor Todd later explained, might easily be accounted for by a very slight variation in Captain Kidd's chronometer.

Careful research brought to light the fact that in 1801, exactly one hundred years after the execution of Captain Kidd in London, a fur trader named Jacques Cartier, who was said to be in the employ of John Jacob Astor and had been coming to Penobscot Bay for years in search of pelts, had built a log house on the island and lived there for many years with his Indian wife. The suspicious thing was that Cartier had always seemed an extremely poor man, living with difficulty on the meager pay he received from Astor. But now, seemingly well supplied with money, he gave up fur trading and devoted himself exclusively to hunting and fishing and drinking.

The patient and influential Mr. Olmsted then claimed to have discovered that Astor's only bank account in this period had been with the Manhattan Company. The business of both Astor and the bank was small in those days. Astor's total deposits in the beginning did not exceed four thousand dollars a year; and when he shipped furs abroad or made sales to local dealers, the books of the bank showed virtually the whole transaction. But in 1801, Mr. Astor paid to Jacques Cartier "in settlement to date," although the annual dealings between the two men had never previously exceeded five hundred dollars, the unprecedented sum of five thousand, which to the woodsman was a fortune. But perhaps it was a fortune well spent. For Astor's deposits in his Manhattan Company bank account jumped that same year to more than half a million dollars.

The very year Jacques Cartier retired to alcoholic ease, the books of the Manhattan Company recorded various credits on drafts remitted to Astor from one Roderick Streeter of London. These drafts varied from ten thousand pounds to fifty thousand pounds. The total for the year was nearly $495,000, which with the normal $5,000 income from his fur business comprised the $500,000 with which his account was credited during the year. During the next two years the Streeter drafts continued to appear

on Mr. Astor's monthly deposit sheets until they reached an additional $800,000, or $1,300,000 in all, when they abruptly ceased.

Mr. Olmsted was naturally curious to find out who this mysterious Mr. Streeter might be who had suddenly begun to pay the modest little New York fur trader a fortune in installments of from $50,000 to $250,000 each, and then had disappeared from the Astor records, apparently forever. He was not wholly surprised to learn that Roderick Streeter was at that time head of the firm of Streeter & Company, which was then and still is, I believe, one of the largest dealers in precious stones in the world.

Then, according to the story, Mr. Olmsted learned that the last house in which the original John Jacob Astor lived had been torn down as lately as the year 1893 to be replaced by a superb modern dwelling; and that the old building had been sold to a wrecking firm. In the hope that the rusty box had been sold with the other rubbish about the premises, Mr. Olmsted began a series of investigations which, sure enough, produced a box which he shipped to Deer Isle, where the bolts upon its bottom and the box itself were found to fit the print in the clay. On the top of the box, distinguishable despite the heavy coating of rust, were scrawled, as if with a chisel or some similar instrument, two identifying marks. They were the initials W. K.

Mr. Olmsted was a very reasonable man. He had begun his search for buried gold in the spirit of fun, and had later pursued the course of the mysterious box and its fabulous contents primarily in the spirit of adventure. He was content with a very modest reckoning. The sum of $1,300,000, which was the amount Streeter had paid Astor, with legal interest computed from date of receipt until the year 1895, would amount to $5,112,234.50, and it was for this sum that he now made formal demand on the Astor estate. The demand was, as he had probably expected, refused.

The declaration filed by his attorneys, Joseph H. Choate, Stewart L. Woodford, and Frederick W. Hollis, set out in full the history of the claim from the beginning, and petitioned the court for the reliefs for which he had already asked; and the Astor family, by their lawyers, Elihu Root and Edward Isham, denied

all liability upon the ground that the cause of action, if ever valid, was barred by the statute of limitations.

There is no further information to be had in regard to the celebrated lawsuit of Frederick Law Olmsted versus John Jacob Astor *et al.* It is presumed by many that the case, if there was one, was settled satisfactorily out of court. For the world's amusement, however, it is too bad that the issue was not joined. It would have been an edifying spectacle not soon forgotten: those two giants of the American bar, Elihu Root and Joseph H. Choate, battling to a finish over the dead bodies of that former baker's boy, Jacob Ashdour, and that "notorious pirate," William Kidd—Root championing Reality and Choate reaching down into the misty ages to resuscitate Romance.

All of which is interesting if true, or even if it is not true. But the important point, so far as the history of Manhattan Island is concerned, lies in the fact that the former baker's boy did get the money *somewhere* to become "The Landlord of New York."

And such land as John Jacob Astor bought! It was the despair of his friends. So was he. He never seemed to buy anything that was any good; or if he did, he promptly sold it and put his money into farm lands and swamps. He purchased an East Side farm and ropewalk from John Selmar and his wife Catherine for $20,000. It is worth $8,000,000 today. He bought from John Cosine a farm which extended from the old Bloomingdale Road, now Broadway, between Fifty-third and Fifty-seventh Streets to the North River, for $23,000. Its present value is at least $6,000,000. He acquired from the financially embarrassed Medcef Eden another little farm on the old Bloomingdale Road at what is now Forty-second to Forty-sixth Street on Times Square. He paid $25,000 for it. The Eden farm is now worth $20,000,000.

John Jacob's profits on his real-estate investments were all the more enormous because most of his purchases, like that from Medcef Eden, took advantage of the original owner's need. Even the supposedly rich and great did not escape him. He acquired half of Governor Clinton's farm and kept after the impoverished Clinton heirs, lending them money and foreclosing mortgages, until he had gained title to a good part of the remainder. He took advantage of land-poor Trinity Church's every need for curates' salaries or parish schools to acquire, often for something

less than a song, an additional parcel of the valuable ecclesiastical land.

The habit of acquisitiveness grew on him with age. The investments he made and remade from their proceeds actually amounted to "a good part of Manhattan Island."

25

MANY OTHER EVENTS WHICH HAPPENED ON OR ABOUT MANhattan Toe during the first years of the new century were important, significant, or just plain amusing. But like the events which happened between 1709 and 1759, they came so fast that perhaps we may best understand the period as a whole if we first run through it in the same telegraphic manner that characterized Chapter 12, then go back, as we did before, and discuss more fully those which left a lasting imprint on the city's life.

1801: Benedict Arnold died in exile, and on the same day, so it is said, the oak tree under which Major André was captured while returning from a conference with the traitor, was struck by lightning and shivered to pieces.

1803: England and France put on another war. Times were hard. New York's first soup kitchen was opened at 6 Frankfort Street.

1803: The *Evening Post* announced that there were "200 new Fire buckets deposited in the Federal Hall, and 250 at the Almshouse, to use as occasion may require."

1803: Cornerstone was laid in the Fields for what is still New York's finest building, the City Hall. Plans called for marble on the south, east, and west sides, plain sandstone on the north. The City Fathers didn't think enough people would ever get that far

up the island to justify the expense of a good-looking backside. (The city is now built-up solidly, block by block, fourteen and five-eighths miles above the Fields.)

1804: In 1929, with prohibition already here and panic just around the corner, workmen digging the foundations for a new skyscraper at Wall and South Street found one hundred bottles of West Indian rum distilled in 1804.

1804: Seventy-five persons died this year from hives, forty-three from old age, thirty-three from teething, eighteen from cold, ten from sore throat, nine from mortification (not, fortunately, including Jimmy Durante), five from colic, and three from cramps.

1804: Grim, but not altogether accurate, popular song of the day was:

> Oh Burr, oh, Burr, what hast thou done?
> Thou has shooted dead great Hamilton
> You hid behind a bunch of thistle,
> And shooted him dead with a great pistol.

1805: Lorenzo da Ponte, librettist of several Mozart operas, became first professor of Italian language and literature at Columbia College, helped to popularize Italian opera.

1805: The Free School Society, DeWitt Clinton, president, was founded. This organization erected, some say on Henry Street and others on Madison near Pearl, the first public school on Manhattan Toe.

1806: There were still wells and pumps in the middle of Broadway, but the water, as usual, wasn't any good.

1807: A commission was appointed to lay out the city above the Fields in streets and avenues and—using a T square instead of a compass—did an execrable job. Broadway, the only main thoroughfare that does not conform to the pattern, is the only one on which New Yorkers can get from here to there without negotiating unnecessary time-wasting, leather-wasting, rubber-wasting, strength-wasting right angles which make New York streets the longest distance between two points. Perhaps we should not criticize these early planners too harshly for not foreseeing the need of more north-and-south thoroughfares to afford easy

transit and the need of parks and playgrounds to afford health and happiness.

1807: The general post office, and the only one, was at the corner of William Street and what is now Exchange Place. It boasted one hundred box-holders.

1807: There were nineteen newspapers in the city, eight of them dailies, also several monthly magazines of sorts, but "art and literature," according to Valentine, "had hardly an existence."

1807: Britain's exercise of the alleged "right of search" and France's exclusion of American ships if they came from British ports or carried British goods caused the Jefferson administration to prohibit all American vessels from leaving the United States and all foreign vessels from taking cargoes out of the United States. This measure, known as "the long embargo," devastated New York shipping, ruined many New York merchants, created a horde of unemployed seamen dependent on New York soup kitchens. The embargo lasted until 1809.

1807: Twenty years after John Fitch is believed to have invented the first steamboat and nearly ten years after he died of a broken heart because he could not gain financial backing, Robert Fulton, a New York portrait painter backed by the current Livingston, steamed up the Hudson to Albany at the rate of five miles an hour, obtained all the credit for the invention, and clinched for his backer, Livingston, a monopoly on steam transportation in New York waters which held back for nearly two decades the paddle wheels of progress.

(NOTE: The author does not wish to become too deeply involved in this Fitch-Fulton controversy, which ranks second in wordage only to the Bacon-Shakespeare one. The main thing is that we got the steamboat! Nevertheless, it is an amusing commentary on New York's lack of accurate knowledge of its own history that approximately a hundred years after Fulton's exploit and two hundred years after Hudson's a New York City administration, most of whose members never heard of either, staged an elaborate affair called the Hudson-Fulton Celebration in honor of the man who, nobody knows for sure, discovered Manhattan Island,

and the man who, almost everybody knows for sure, did not invent the steamboat.)

1807: News that the eminent refugee, Aaron Burr, had been arrested for trying to establish a private empire in New Orleans was received without surprise or any other notable reaction on Manhattan Toe.

1808: Grace Church No. 1 rose at the corner of Broadway and Rector, a modest building without steeple or cross. Nevertheless, "both young men and women," we are told, "fancied there was an air of quiet gentility in and about it not to be met elsewhere."

1809: Sanity note: Washington Irving published the first remotely credible history of New York and, of course, it was fictional.

1809: Tammany was getting into its stride. Founder William Mooney got himself made superintendent of the almshouse. Gin allegedly consumed by inmates immediately doubled, rum quadrupled. Mooney, a $1,000-a-year official, with a $500 allowance for family expenses, ran up bills for $5,000, in extras, mostly, he explained, "trifles for Mrs. Mooney."

1809: The Society for the Encouragement of Faithful Domestic Servants offered these rewards: for one year's service, a handsome octavo bible or in lieu thereof $2.00, in two years thereafter $3.00, in three years $5.00, in four years $7.00, in five years $10.00. Beyond ten years there was obviously, on either side, no hope.

1810: James Harper, Long Island farmer's son, came to New York to learn the printer's trade. He was soon joined by Harper brother John.

1810: New York was a big girl now: population of Manhattan Island, 96,373; population of territory now included in Greater New York, 119,734. But we mustn't let mere size impress us too much. New York was still far from a modern metropolis. As late as 1819, according to official estimates, 20,000 hogs were running at large in the streets.

1810: As for churches, there were in this year on Manhattan Toe: one Jewish, two Roman Catholic, six Baptist, seven Methodist, eight Reformed Dutch, nine Presbyterian, and thirteen Episcopal.

1810: The *Evening Post* noted that "a married woman walking up Water Street last evening was attacked twice by men. Who informs her friends of these scoundrels obliges her husband. Such varlets are to be unmasked."

1811: Dr. Mason, head of the Reformed Church Theological Seminary, made the front pages with this epochal utterance: "I have often thought that it required as much grace to keep the Apostle Peter from knocking a man down in the street as to make the Apostle John look like an angel."

1811: First Tammany building, half hall and half hotel, rose at the corner of Nassau and Frankfort.

1812: War came again to America but at first affected Manhattan Toe only because of the institution of another embargo—"the short embargo," it was called—which made New York merchants very mad. Profits of privateering and trading with the enemy soon balanced their budgets. But not before John Jacob Astor, taking advantage of the brief wartime slump, had brought up a great many mortgages, foreclosed them, and bought back the properties at ridiculous prices.

1812: Production of war songs was brisk. Tammany tried to make people forget the almshouse scandal with:

> Old England is trying to kick up a muss,
> I think she had better not interfere with us.
> If she wants to fight us, she'll find it no fun,
> She'll git what she got from General Washington.

The boy in the street made life miserable for prisoners of war with this one:

> Who comes here? A grenadier.
> What do you want? A pot of beer.
> Where's your penny? I forgot.
> Get you gone, you toss-pot sot.

1813: Marriages between slaves became legal.

1814: Feverishly New York prepared for invasion, built forts (of very doubtful value) all over the place. "Happily," wrote one observer, "the effectiveness of these defenses were never put to the test."

1815: The postwar boom, which was all that Hollywood means by "terrific," showed itself first in the auctions, which had become the chief sources of daily bid-and-asked quotations on merchandise. Wall Street, near the Coffee House slip, lined on both sides with auction rooms, became known as Merchants' Promenade or Auctioneers' Row.

1816: Suggestion of questionable value from *The Gazette* of July 9: "Our city has of late taken a very *musical turn.* In the day time we are entertained with trumpets by New Jersey buttermilk blacks, and New York rusk boys—in the night by the smutty ditties of the nightly scavengers. Would it not greatly add to the harmony, to have the bells of all the churches rung at every half hour in order that the sick and dying may keep an account of their last moments?"

1816: The city's "milk was borne in tin cans suspended from the carriers' shoulders and was supplied from cows within the city limits or contiguous shores of Long Island or New Jersey."

1816: Contemporary descriptions of pre-Moses park system: "The Battery Walk is the most delightful promenade in the city . . . *the battery* (originally) devoted to purposes of war, but which has ever since been consecrated to the sweet delights of peace". . . . and "The Park (formerly known as the Fields) . . . is a very elegant, pleasant and fashionable resort. . . . The whole is enclosed by a railing, the City Hall greatly enhances the beauty of the place, and as it is in contemplation to remove the Jail and the Bridewell to some other quarter, these improvements will greatly add to the attractions of a spot so highly prized by the citizens of New York."

1817: The war of 1812 had had one lasting beneficial effect. Long-sighted New Yorkers, realizing the continuing perils of war upon

the sea, began looking west through Jeffersonian eyeglasses to the development of their own land—and their own waters. In 1812 Henry Eckford of Corlear's Hook, with forty shipbuilders, had made the long wilderness journey from Albany to Lake Ontario. Five months later Noah Brown, with more New York shipbuilders, penetrated "the then almost unknown forest fastnesses surrounding the shores of Lake Erie." Both parties of pioneers, reinforced by more men dispatched by Christian Bergh, also of New York City, built out of the region's massive trees ships larger than any ever built on Manhattan Toe. With one fleet Commodore Chauncey kept the ships under Sir James Yeo at bay throughout the war, and with the other Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry won the victory on Lake Erie which enabled him to send the classic message, "We have met the enemy and they are ours."

1818: The Mayor's Court, highest in the city, sentenced Lawrence Peinovie to two years in prison for having bitten off his wife's nose. "This is the first offense of its kind," said the Mayor, "to blur the escutcheon of the Republic." Nothing was said about the blur on Mrs. P.'s escutcheon.

1818: Mr. John R. Voorhis, most durable and most beloved of Tammany Grand Sachems, on his one hundredth birthday in 1929 (he died at the age of 102), told a reporter from the *Evening World:* "When I was about ten years old my mother took me to Brooks Brothers' store [founded 1818], which was then in Catharine Street, opposite the old Catharine Street fish market, and bought me my first long pants suit. I have bought every suit since that time from Brooks Brothers."

1819: The Bank of Savings, first mutual savings institution, got itself founded. It still has the first dollar it ever saved.

1820: Valentine said: "Although the Sabbath was almost free from disturbance by carriages, still, for fear that someone might be passing during worship, the churches had chains drawn across the streets on either side."

1821: Interments of human bodies below Grand Street were forbidden.

1821: Dr. Haswell, in his *Reminiscences of an Octogenarian,* tells us that Tammany Hall, then at the corner of Park Row and Frankfort Street (operated, as we have seen, as a hotel), was advertised as "a very salutary location, being on high and open ground and airy." Salutary or not as a health resort, Tammany Hall was actually instrumental at the constitutional convention of this year in passing the act granting universal male suffrage regardless of property qualifications.

1821: A cold winter: Passengers crossed the North River on the ice to Paulus Hook (Jersey City); the East River to Brooklyn and Governor's Island; and the harbor itself, from Long Island to Staten Island.

1821: Mordecai M. Noah, New York's first great Jewish editor, who believed that the American Indians were descendants of the twelve tribes of Israel, published in *The Advocate* an account of "a man with a hand-organ, accompanied by a woman as having appeared in the public streets, and the question was asked, who are they?"

1822: Peter Cotte, a confectioner, "occasionally received a bunch of bananas, which he displayed outside to the wonder of a great proportion of our citizens, juveniles and country people."

1823: Great George Street, to the left of the Fields, had become part of Broadway and received the sacrament of paving. "Daring real estate speculators prophesied that Broadway would some day be built up as far as 10th Street." But fashionables were already complaining of the intrusion of mercantile interests. A. T. Stewart's store, now Wanamaker's, on Broadway just above the Fields, was the first. Stewart, discouraged and nearly starving because of his daring uptown venture, marked down his stock to what he considered ridiculously low prices, advertised same. Crowds mobbed his counters. This "Sacrifice Sale" was the foundation of his fortune and of large-scale department store advertising in the daily press.

1823: In such essential matters as lighting its streets and homes, Manhattan Toe was preparing for its obvious destiny.

1824: Over in the town of Brooklyn, men who threw ropes from the decks of ferryboats began to observe a stout little boy not yet five years old, who would ask them if the horses that propelled the boats seemed well that day; this was Walt Whitman. Few other New Yorkers had as yet heard of him; but the question of whether Sir Walter Scott was the author of the anonymous Waverley Novels already had the readers of books by the ears.

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OF THE EVENTS WHICH HAVE JUST BEEN RECOUNTED, THE first to affect permanently the history of New York was the death of Alexander Hamilton.

Thomas Jefferson and Burr had tied in electoral votes at the election of 1800. This threw the choice into Congress. The Democrats' plan had been for Jefferson to be president and Burr vice-president, the law being at that time that the candidate receiving the second largest number of votes rated the latter office; but the unexpected tie gave Burr the crafty notion of getting the presidency for himself. Most of the Federalists, hating and fearing Jefferson, were inclined to aid the coup, but Hamilton, who knew his Burr, talked them out of the idea. Burr never forgave him, and, four years later, he made the quarrel a personal one and challenged Hamilton to a duel.

Accompanied by their seconds they crossed the Hudson River to the famous Weehawken dueling ground, described as "a grassy ledge some 20 feet above the Hudson . . . only 2 yards wide and 12 long, just large enough for a standard-size duel." The accepted theory is that Hamilton fired into the air to avoid a casualty and that Burr fired to kill, but the hatred which existed between the two men makes this theory a mere assumption. Sympathy has remained so strongly with the dead man that no one has paid any attention to the fact that Hamilton was a high-living, convivial man who loved to get together with his brothers of the Cincinnati

and sing his favorite song, "How Stands the Glass Around?" whereas Burr was more likely to be steady of eye and hand, and would probably have won the duel whatever Hamilton's procedure may have been.

Aaron Burr's political ideas were more like those of our own time than Alexander Hamilton's were. At least, they were until the recent depression and war so strengthened the hand of the federal government. But his methods and his personality had made him many enemies, and to Hamilton and his group he was detestable. It was firmly believed that he had deliberately planned to kill his rival, and for purposes of political gain. That his closest political associates knew of such plans has never been proved, although it may be significant that two Tammany sachems acted as his seconds, that another sachem was at Burr's house awaiting news of the result, and that all that night, while Hamilton was dying, the braves celebrated in Martling's long room and drank toasts to their hero, Aaron Burr. Next day, however, the traditional "morning after" counsels prevailed, and the Grand Sachem called "an extra meeting of the tribes in the Great Wigwam . . . to pay the last tribute of national respect due to the manes of our departed fellow citizen and soldier, General Alexander Hamilton."

By the great body of citizens on Manhattan Toe Hamilton was sincerely mourned, as he should have been. With all his vanities and aristocratic pretensions, he was a great man. Next to Washington and Jefferson, the nation probably owed more to his greatness than to any other's; and much of the greatness that was Washington's in the realm of politics, for which the father of his country had no desire and little talent, owed more to Hamilton's astuteness than to his own.

Washington, a man almost inarticulate in personal contact, possessing an education which was little more than elementary, was continually making speeches and writing papers which combined the suavity of a Chesterfield with the vocabulary of a Noah Webster. That Hamilton, Washington's secretary and confidant, most scholarly man of his day, master of the formal but lucid style which, by his fifty-one contributions to the eighty-five famous Federalist Papers, made them the decisive factor in the adoption of our Constitution, wrote most of Washington's speeches and

papers is a deduction which does not require the detective powers of a Sherlock Holmes or of a Perry Mason.

There was plenty of internal evidence, too, in those presumably Hamilton-written Washington utterances: for example, the famous warning widely publicized in our day against "entangling alliances" in Washington's Farewell Address, which was obviously the result of Jefferson's friendliness for the French and Hamilton's instinctive distrust of anything his enemy, Jefferson, favored.

Some have been crude enough to infer that Washington was merely Hamilton's tool. As we have seen, he was much more than that: he was a symbol. Moreover, the Federalist theory of a strong central government conceived by Hamilton and successfully implemented by Washington's popularity and personality, was essential to the founding of a stable republic. It was the glue that stuck the thirteen original states together; without it they would have fallen apart and become easy victims of foreign nations or of each other. So Washington, by his very existence, made possible the realization of Hamilton's ideal. It is indeed hard to say where Hamilton's part left off and Washington's part began. Between them, although they were cursed for it, they built the country over which Jefferson and his republican-democratic successors were rightfully to rule.

Washington's personal prestige was sufficient to enable Hamilton to keep the Jeffersonian democrats from open rebellion during the President's first term and to secure his unanimous selection for a second; but the storm broke, as it usually does, during the second term. Leaders of the Senate "ganged up" on him as they have on subsequent presidents. The Federalists, to whom he was now definitely committed, were losing out. The Republicans, who were part of his first administration, not only refused to join his second, but successfully fought it and him. His historic refusal of the nomination for a third term, therefore, was not for the purpose of setting a precedent. It was for the purpose of saving a proud, tired old gentleman from humiliating defeat.

No one in New York of the late 1790's could have imagined how this situation would later be distorted into a sacrosanct precedent which was to infuriate the enemies and plague the friends of two members of that Roosevelt family so intimately associated with the city's history. The effect of Washington's retirement on

the career of his faithful and favorite lieutenant was, however, clear.

As a dominating factor in national politics, Alexander Hamilton was through when Aaron Burr shot him in the "right side of the belly a little above the hip," and Hamilton knew it. He had been able to crowd through his masterly plans for a strong national finance only by agreeing to Jefferson's insistence that the national capital should be located in the South. Southern and Northern-rural hostility put the presidency beyond him. He was back in New York City practicing law when he was killed.

Politically minded and politically experienced, he might in time, if he had lived, have become an influential factor in the field where his abilities were still valued. On the other hand, there are those who believe that his death may have been the greatest contribution he could have made to the story of New York City, for by it he eliminated Burr as a political factor. One shot had ended the political careers of the city's two ablest men.

The immediate effect of this double catastrophe on the future of New York City was also twofold: first, it left the anti-Tammany element leaderless, a condition in which it was to remain, except for brief interludes, for more than a hundred years; and, second, it robbed Tammany Hall of a leader who, although crafty and unscrupulous, was certainly a cut above most of the men who have led it ever since, and who might, solely as a matter of policy, have diverted its course into less muddy waters.

The second event to affect the progress of life in New York City was Robert Fulton's so-called invention of the steamboat in 1807.

More than ever before, the city was concerned with transit by water. Out in the harbor rode packets that plied to Liverpool and Le Havre and coasting ships for Savannah and Charleston and New Orleans, along with innumerable smaller brigs, sloops, and schooners. Along South Street had begun to rise that forest of masts and that slant undergrowth of bowsprits which later marked the heyday of the clipper.

The busy harbor scene was ever a source of interest to New York's elite, who still repaired in the late afternoon to the Battery, now provided with a flagstone promenade bordered by a low wooden fence. Wrote Mayor Philip Hone: "I walked with my

wife for an hour before dinner at the Battery. What a beautiful spot it is!...A prospect unexcelled by any city in the world." This was the scene which was to cause Walt Whitman to write in later years: "Ah, what can ever be more stately and more admirable to me than mast-hemmed Manhattan!"

What had kept Manhattan's ocean front hemmed by masts instead of smokestacks was the Fulton-Livingston monopoly. New Yorkers traveled on monopoly steamboats, or stuck to sail. So-called pirate ships operated by outsiders were destroyed by court order. When, late in 1807, the year of Fulton's famous trip to Albany, the good Colonel John Stevens of Hoboken, who had been working on the problem for twelve years, completed his own successful steamboat, the *Phoenix,* he had to take her to Philadelphia before she was allowed to rise from her own ashes. In 1815, when Fulton died, a paltry eight steamboats and one steam ferry between Manhattan and Jersey City were the monopoly's sole contribution to New York's river navigation.

Finally, in 1817, a man named Thomas Gibbons, who lived on the Jersey side, claimed the right to operate his *Mouse of the Mountain* from that shore, and the following year another Jersey steamboat, the *Bellona,* took up the battle. Captain of the *Bellona,* called Commodore because he had once operated a ferry between New York and Staten Island, was a certain Cornelius Vanderbilt.

Gibbons, a two-fisted fighter, took his case to the U.S. Supreme Court, hired a promising young lawyer, Congressman Daniel Webster, to present his claims, and won a decision written by Chief Justice John Marshall making all such navigation monopolies in foreign or interstate commerce forever void. Vanderbilt, quick to see the import of this decision, bought the *Bellona* on the usual shoestring and, while his wife kept up the family income by operating the Bellona Tavern at the New Brunswick terminal, proceeded to establish the People's Line, first of many Hudson River systems of transportation to Albany. Later his chief competitor was the Citizens' Line owned by Daniel Drew. In view of the rivals' subsequent "public be damned" records, the choice of names contains a grim humor.

Ministers of the gospel, instituting the now traditional Albany night-boat vendetta, loudly proclaimed the ships of both lines resorts of "women of low and venial character," and thus added

immeasurably to the box-office receipts. Some said that what really irked the clerics was that Sunday and week-end excursions up the Hudson left them with empty pews and empty contribution plates.

Decorations on these early Albany night boats were ornate, but sleeping quarters were below par. Captain Marryat, a tolerant world traveler, considered as merely "whimsical" the sight of five hundred people in five rows of triple-tier beds "lying in every state of posture and degree of repose." But Fanny Kemble, the celebrated British actress, was much more worked up about it. "As for privacy," she wrote, "at any time or under any circumstances, 'tis a thing that enters not into the imagination of America." (Which would seem to prove that the clergy's "women of low and venial character" must have had a rather thin time.) But, regardless of the moral issues involved, we did have *some* steamboats, and although many years were to pass before New Yorkers saw the wisdom of using them for purposes less open to suspicion, a beginning had been made in steam's ultimate conquest of the world's greatest harbor.

Far more important in its immediate effect on the development of New York City was the turning on of the gas. We of these electric-lighted times incline to laugh at what we call "the gaslight era," but the change from gaslight to electricity, marked though it has been, was as nothing compared with the change from darkness to light—for that is, in effect, what happened when, after two centuries of hesitation, man decided to build a second story on his day. That decision, so far-reaching in its effects, has received little notice from historians, especially historians of New York City, who seem to have been content to treat it as a strictly commercial matter, note its happening as one might note the building of a new pier or warehouse, then turn off the gas and forget it. Actually, the coming of a real illuminant was one of the most notable events in all history; and one of the most notable things about it was that its coming had been so long delayed.

There was nothing new about gas in the first years of the nineteenth century, except the use of it. Way back in 1609, the *hackhack* year in which Henry Hudson stumbled upon New York, an obscure Belgian chemist had discovered a "spirit, hitherto unknown," which he had called by a "new name—gas."

Nearly two centuries later, on January 28, 1807, the year Robert Fulton took his first steamboat trip from New York to Albany, gas lamps were lit on one side of London's Pall Mall. This was the first recorded instance of public street lighting with gas. The excitement was not confined to London. It spread even to the pioneer American communities of Boston and Baltimore; and, finally, to that brave young city whose beginnings had shared with the discovery of Joannes van Helmont's "spirit, hitherto unknown," the front-page news of 1609.

So far as immediate practical results went, the efforts of Baltimore and Boston pioneers were not too promising, but the New York City situation developed more rapidly. That New York's preeminence in this needful step in human progress was due, in part, to an exhibitor of freaks was quite in keeping with the traditionally "cockeyed" nature of much of the city's history.

Charles Willson Peale, the famous portrait painter, had several sons, all named for great painters. Two of them, Rembrandt and Rubens, went into the museum business. Rembrandt, himself a fine painter, was the more conservative of the two: he devoted his museum to exhibitions of preserved fish, birds, and animals, to specimens illustrating the colorful life of the American Indian, and to historic portraits of the type associated with the family name. Rubens was more venturesome: he went in for "a calf with two heads, six legs, two tails, two distinct hearts and backbones, but otherwise perfectly formed," and for the very learned dog, Romeo, that "answered questions on any subject, scientific, political, etc.—and played cards."

Characteristically, Rembrandt chose for his operations the conservative city of Baltimore, and Rubens came to New York. But in both of their museums during the second decade of the new century appeared startling exhibitions of the great European novelty, the spirit that burned like a flame. And it was Rubens' activities in this respect which led ultimately to another memorable trip to Albany which was to effect an almost miraculous change in the life of the future metropolis. In fact, it may be said that an entirely new phase of New York history began at sundown, February 21, 1823, when there stepped from a stagecoach at Albany three sturdy citizens of Manhattan—Samuel Leggett, Thomas Morris, and Josiah Ogden Hoffman—who were

Courtesy of the New-York Historical Society

WALL STREET, EAST FROM BROADWAY, 1833-4

(Drawn by Hugh Reinagle, lithographed by Peter Maverick, Jr.)

From the J. Clarence Davies Collection, Museum of the City of New York

THE GREAT FIRE OF DECEMBER 16, 1835

seeking a charter for the New York Gas Light Company, an organization destined to repeat and exceed the triumphs of its Old World predecessors.

The oil and tallow interests did not give the pilgrims their benediction, and the free but not always independent press of the period was quick to obey its masters' voices; but, after the usual pressing of ears to the political ground, the Albany solons decided, in view of the interest shown in Rubens Peale's exhibitions, that their best chance of re-election lay in granting a charter to the new company. The franchise was intended to be an over-all one. It covered the entire territory "from the Battery to Grand Street"!

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THE SUDDEN SPURT IN THE ART OF READING ON MANHATTAN Toe during the second quarter of the nineteenth century was indubitably due to the turning on of the gas and the consequent lengthening of the period in which reading could be done without too much danger to the reader's eyesight. Not, however, until the public had recovered from a state of understandable perturbation over the new illuminant.

On this point history was merely repeating itself. "I'll not believe it, there's no sich a thing," said Dickens' lamplighter, when the gas lamp was first mentioned to him. "You may as well talk of laying on an everlasting succession of glow-worms." Dickens also records that when the gas pioneers had made the experiment of lighting a piece of Pall Mall, and the lamplighter had actually witnessed it with his own eyes, he fell off his ladder from weakness "fourteen times that very night." His last fall, fortunately, was into a wheelbarrow which was going his way, and humanely took him to his home.

It cannot be said that the turning on of the gas in New York City had any such startling effect. But ignorant laymen trembled at the thought of the new invention because they believed that the flames themselves ran hotly and dangerously through the pipes. Columnists, tavern wags, caricaturists, and song writers took a fling at this "spirit, hitherto unknown."

Ministers quoted from Genesis to prove that God had appointed

both the day and the night and that, therefore, this new attempt to improve on God's handiwork was nothing less than blasphemous. Physicians professed to believe that gas lamps would cause people to keep late hours and expose themselves to the injurious night air. Constables maintained that the new illumination would frighten their horses and thus enable thieves and gangsters more easily to ply their trade. Prohibitionists urged that gas would lengthen the toper's hours of drinking. And moralists opined that it would destroy the calming influence of the twilight which preserved the unwary from sin.

But what could they do about it? Wasn't it written in the Old Testament that "God said, let there be light: and there was light"?

The newspaper profession naturally profited hugely by the lengthening of the reading day. William Cullen Bryant, more widely remembered as the author of "Thanatopsis" than as a newspaperman, came down from Massachusetts in 1826 to become first subeditor and then editor of the *Evening Post*. Bryant was to be a leader for fifty years in New York life, and a member (with George Bancroft, the historian, and Washington Irving) of the three-man commission that made possible Frederick Law Olmsted's Central Park. Nathaniel P. Willis, a minor poet compared with Bryant but called by James Russell Lowell the "topmost bubble on the wave of the town," with his partner, George P. Morris, author of "Woodman, Spare That Tree," published *The Mirror,* bought Edgar Allan Poe's "The Raven," and later gave that always needy poet regular employment.

Poe himself, nervous, ill, frequently intoxicated, was nevertheless a hard-working newspaperman, and more of a credit to his profession than moralists-turned-historians have been willing to admit. But he did play a trick on Benjamin Day, who in 1833 had founded New York's first penny paper, the *Sun.* Being short of money as usual, Poe dashed off a wholly imaginary news story of the landing on the South Carolina coast of a balloon equipped with a screw propeller and a rudder, which had purportedly carried eight people across the Atlantic in three days. As Mr. Poe explained, "the passengers had intended to fly from North Wales across the English Channel, but the propeller had broken down and the dirigible had been carried over the Atlantic by a strong northeast wind." Editors of the *Sun,* when the hoax was promptly

exposed by their esteemed contemporaries, saved their faces, but did not hide their blushes, by insisting that their rivals did not "appreciate the pleasant satire."

Inspiration for the Poe hoax was undoubtedly the one previously perpetrated on Day, or *by* him, entitled "Great Astronomical Discoveries—Lately Made by Sir John Herschel, L. L. D., F. R. S., &c—At the Cape of Good Hope," and was supposed to be a reprint from the *Edinburgh Journal of Science,* which had folded many years previous to the alleged discoveries. Years later the editors of the *Sun* wrote with understandable glee: "Written by cross-eyed, pock-marked [reporter] Locke as a satire and published in installments, this glorious fake had the city reading the *Sun* by day and studying the moon by night.... The hoax sent the circulation of the *Sun* to more than 19,000 copies, the largest of any daily in the world." Wrote admiring reporter Poe: "From the epoch of the Hoax, the *Sun* shone with unmitigated splendor."

It also introduced a new, and now familiar, touch into American journalism:

> Mr. Clay arrived in town last evening and attended the new opera in company with Martin Van Buren.
>
> Richard Davis was fined for taking a drop too much.
>
> The Hon. Daniel Webster will leave town this morning for Washington.
>
> Mr. Cooper, the American novelist, and family, have arrived in the ship Sampson.
>
> Ann McDonough of Washington street attempted to drink a pint of rum on a wager, on Wednesday afternoon last. Before it was half swallowed Ann was a corpse. Serve her right!

The sidewalks of New York—at last there *were* some—were already subjects of public discussion:

> The sidewalks of Broadway, from the Park to John street, are obstructed to such a degree as to render it impossible for a number of people to make headway without considerable inconvenience, and the unlucky wight who might happen to be propelled by a crowd in that vicinity, would have a very slight chance of escaping

"sundry bruises and putrifying sores." We advise all who do not desire broken necks to be cautious how they promenade that region.

Most active in local politics among the New York literati was Major Mordecai Manuel Noah, editor and dramatist, who was, among many other things, a sachem of Tammany Hall. When he received the Hall's nomination for sheriff, whose duties at that time included the hanging of condemned prisoners, certain anti-Semites inquired indignantly, "Who is a Jew that he should be allowed to hang a Christian?" To which Noah, no mental sluggard, replied, "Pretty sort of Christian that should require hanging at anyone's hands!"

By far the most eccentric, and also the most absent-minded, figure in the awakening literary life of New York was Horace Greeley, who founded the *Tribune* in 1841. Daniel Frohman, who started his own successful career as Greeley's office boy, remembered how the boss used to sit at his desk writing his callithumping editorials while a stream of water poured down on his head from a leaking overhead pipe. Don Seitz, himself a newspaperman not without eccentricities, told of an evening party which Greeley dropped in on at a late hour; his hostess passed him a plate piled high with doughnuts and, lost in thought, he ate them all; then he picked up a huge plate of cheese cut up into cubes, and, still obviously absorbed in his own thoughts, ate every last cube. He then got up and went home. "There is no record," Mr. Seitz added, "of a disaster."

Washington Irving, at forty, was already dean of American letters. Around him, in the side streets near the Fields, lived and worked, ate and drank, a growing circle of the first American writers to achieve more than local fame. Irving's wide acquaintance among European men of letters and later the distinction gained by his appointment as U.S. minister to Spain did more than any other factors to lift our literature out of the provincial class. His were the first books by a native American to be read abroad widely and with respect.

In 1821 James Fenimore Cooper had written *The Spy,* the first American romance to compete with the immensely popular Waverley Novels of Sir Walter Scott. It was an experiment in which he himself had so little confidence that he let the manu-

script of the first volume lie around a whole year before starting on the second. There is a tradition that the printing started before the story was finished, and that Cooper, to appease his printer, Charles Wiley, wrote a final chapter, which he permitted to be printed and paged. Then, at his leisure, he filled in the intervening incidents. The book was an immediate success, the first of many of the same kind by the same author. Cooper, an irascible man, lacked the personal popularity of Irving, but contributed markedly nevertheless to the world's acceptance of American literature.

Both of these pioneers were businessmen as well as authors, and kept in their own hands most of the details of the publication of their works. Irving, writing to his friend Brevoort about the projected publication of *The Sketch Book,* said: "When I published the first edition of 'Knickerbocker' I only allowed Bradford and Inskeep (whose imprint it bore) 20 per cent, and they take all the risk of the book's not selling." Even a Washington Irving would look far today for a publisher willing to accept such terms.

Book publishers as we know them today did not exist. James Harper, reinforced now not only by Harper brother John but by Harper brothers Joseph and Fletcher, was a printer. Until 1830 most Harper books bore the imprint "printed by," or "printed for" if the author or a group of booksellers was the actual publisher. But the man to whom American book publishing and American book writing owe most of the benefits which they now enjoy—including the principles of copyright and royalty—was already, although modestly, even obscurely, launching his career as the first great American publisher. His name was G. P. Putnam.

Naturally one of the first of the arts to feel the effect of no longer needing to burn the midnight oil or candle was the drama. Theaters proudly announced in billing larger than either play or star that they were "Brilliantly Lighted by Gas." And with its aid Charles Kean invaded New York in what was then considered a stupendous production of Shakespeare's *Richard III;* Charlotte Cushman gave the town her Lady Macbeth, her Meg Merrilies, even her Hamlet; W. E. Burton became famous as Captain Cuttle, master mariner; Adah Isaacs Menken, in *Mazeppa,* thrilled first nighters by her entrance, tied bare back to bare back, on a prancing horse; Jim Crow Rice—out of whose bag Joseph Jeffer-

son, blacked up as a pickaninny, was later dumped for his theatrical debut—popularized Negro minstrelsy; and on humbler gaslit stages Mose, the volunteer fireman, and Lize, his gal, and Old Put's black horse, Vulture, brought cheers from appreciative galleries.

The hearty welcome with which cosmopolitan New York greeted artists from overseas was by no means confined to artists of the stage. Dickens, even after his *American Notes,* again received the literary freedom of the city when he returned to recoup his finances with a lecture tour. And later, when the beloved British novelist Thackeray came to this country, he was greeted with that open-armed hospitality which New York has always offered to the foreign literary lion within its gates. How very open-armed it was in Thackeray's case may be judged from an incident which he himself relates.

"Had a pleasant dinner with a party at Delmonico's," records the distinguished visitor. "Came home late and had an awful escape,—I tremble when I think of it. Took my key at the bar, entered my apartment, began to pull off my boots, etc., etc., when a sweet female voice from the room within exclaimed 'George!' I had gone into the second floor room instead of the third. I gathered my raiment together and dashed out of the premises."

Literary gentlemen homeward bound, filled with good cheer, were less likely in those days to have come from Delmonico's than from Pfaff's Beer Cellar, where Walt Whitman, with his hair long and flowing and his shirt open and red, matched jests and steins with his more frivolous contemporary, Artemus Ward; but Thackeray was a guest and for a guest nothing in New York was too good. No one appreciated this fact more keenly than Thackeray himself. He made many friends among New Yorkers of that day, and managed to keep them, unlike some of his less tactful contemporaries and successors, by refusing all offers to write a book about them.

After the Battle of Waterloo had come an influx of German intellectuals, both Jews and gentiles. Rebecca Gratz, most celebrated of American Jewesses, lived in Philadelphia, but she was a close friend of Irving, Paulding, Brevoort, Halleck, Drake, and the whole "literary crowd" now centering on Manhattan Toe. Irving's description of Rebecca to his friend Sir Walter Scott is

believed to have been the inspiration of the latter's best-known novel, *Ivanhoe.* In more ways than one New York was making itself felt in the literary life of the world.

The year 1825 saw the establishment of the New York Drawing Association, from which stemmed the National Academy of Design. Its first public exhibition was held the following year. The first president was the distinguished artist Samuel F. B. Morse, sometimes referred to as the inventor of the telegraph. An exhibition of nudes which attracted much larger crowds was held in the East River. Rumors that bathing *au naturel* was going on in that staid stream quickly drew all the young blades of the town, but the bathers were found to be little boys. The canal in Canal Street was filled in, a sewer substituted; but the Hudson River exit continued to be known and used as Suicide Slip; suicides don't care what they suicide in.

The population of New York City was about 145,000. There were ten wards. The humble skyline was sharply splintered with little church steeples. Below Maiden Lane, buildings stood fairly close together with something of a metropolitan air. Above the Lane, there were gardens around the houses and vacant lots which sometimes ran out into open fields. The most fashionable residences were around the Battery and up Broadway and Greenwich Street as far, perhaps, as Cortlandt. Grand Street was still practically out of town.

Discussion in 1823 was busy with the question of whether or not Fort Clinton, abandoned as a military post in favor of Governor's Island, should be sacrificed entirely on the altar of civic beauty. The old fort then formed a little island connected with the Battery by a drawbridge some two hundred feet long. Citizens loved to promenade in the shade of the big fine trees along the Battery, where the work of facing the embankment with a stone parapet was now briskly going forward. They loved the ancient fortress, too. Therefore, it suffered a kindlier fate than usually befalls an abandoned structure in the city of New York. In the summer of 1824 it opened as a place of amusement—Castle Garden, a hallowed name.

These civic activities at the Battery were exceptions to the general rule. There was little or no money spent on municipal improvements. The city's streets were still frankly medieval. Each

occupant of a building or owner of a vacant lot was compelled by law twice a week on specified days to scrape and sweep the pavement before his premises as far as the middle of the roadway, to gather the dirt in a heap, and on it to place the ashes and rubbish brought from his home or cellar. The city then was responsible for its removal. That was summer. In the winter, no street cleaning was attempted. Hogs were still the only scavengers; and laws were passed to keep them from running loose on the streets without rings in their noses. Even so, the pugnacity of an old sow with a litter of pigs occasionally became horribly momentous to small children and a matter for editorial stricture in the press.

Union Square, soon to be a center of political activity, was still an intersection of country turnpikes known as Union Place. Madison Square was a military parade ground several miles from town. Washington Square was but recently a potter's field; as late as 1822 criminals had been hanged from a gallows there and buried on the spot. Fourteenth Street was not dug out until 1829, nor was Fifth Avenue yet opened from Thirteenth to Twenty-fifth Streets. Greenwich Village, a country suburb to the northwest of New York, was populated largely by refugees from an epidemic of yellow fever in the summer of 1822, which killed 388 in the city, seriously disrupted business, and put a heavy strain on municipal finances. (Even as late as 1848, Greenwich Village was sufficiently separated from the city proper to serve as an asylum to those fleeing from the cholera epidemic raging below.)

How remote other sections of the island were considered is suggested by the will of Robert Lenox, to whom the city in 1818 deeded the land bounded by Seventy-first Street, Fifth Avenue, Park Avenue, and Seventy-fourth Street for $500. He left this "Farm at the Five Mile Stone" to his son, James. "My motive for so doing," read the will, "is a Firm Persuasion that it may at No Distant Day be the site of a village."

Small groups lived, so one heard, in places called Chelsea, Harsenville, Bloomingdale, Yorkville, Harlem, Manhattanville, Inwood, and Carmansville. One by one the little stragglers on Manhattan Island have been drawn into the metropolitan vortex, to be followed in their turn by other towns across the Harlem River—Mott Haven, Morrisania, Fordham, West Farms, Tremont, Wake-

field, Kingsbridge, Woodlawn, and Williamsbridge. But they were just country villages on the broad farm acres of 1823.

New York was still the victim, as were other cities along the Atlantic seaboard, of the continuing difficulties of transportation by land. In 1825 John Quincy Adams, traveling as fast as any mere tourist could expect to travel, averaged only fifty miles a day on a hurried trip from Washington to Boston. Transportation of commodities other than human was equally deliberate and, quite as important so far as business was concerned, very expensive. It wasn't until 1828 that the first passenger railroad train was dragged fourteen miles by horses over the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. It wasn't until 1831 that the first railroad train was drawn by a locomotive from Albany to Schenectady. Mail rates in 1823 were six cents for any distance up to thirty miles, ten cents from thirty to eighty miles, twelve and a half cents from eighty to one hundred and fifty miles, eighteen and one half cents from a hundred and fifty to four hundred miles, and beyond that distance twenty-five cents. These rates were for single sheets. Citizens who could not convey their messages in less than two sheets were required to pay double rates.

The city of New York, for all its traffic on the high seas, still lacked the Midas touch, the alchemy of an unfettered commerce that would have turned its very streets to gold. Which brings us to what was indubitably the most important event, commercially speaking, in the history of New York City, and to the individual who was, politically speaking, perhaps its greatest man.

28

EVERY REASONABLY INTELLIGENT AMERICAN ADOLESCENT CAN tell the inquiring reporter who Alexander Hamilton was, and tell as straight a story as the best of our baffled historians can about Aaron Burr. But to the average citizen the name DeWitt Clinton, if he knows it at all, means a New York City high school which has produced some of the country's better athletes and, doubtless, although their achievements have been less publicized, some of its better scholars.

The reason for this is obvious, but saddening. Hamilton and Burr were actors who performed on a national stage. Clinton, although briefly a U.S. senator and even more briefly a candidate for U.S. president, was essentially a New Yorker.

The Reverend Mr. Matthews, representing the conservative element, solemnly averred that "at first glance Clinton showed that he was no ordinary man. The majestic was a predominant feature of his mind and body. You saw it in his figure, in his manner, in his countenance, all indicating him to be the right man to be Governor of the Empire State, and to create an era in her history that should never be forgotten." And Samuel Woodworth, a recruit from Bohemia, the printer-poet who achieved fame as the author of "The Old Oaken Bucket," on being shown unexpectedly a bust of the great man by the sculptor John I. Browerie, is said to have burst extemporaneously into:

"Stay! the bust that graces yonder shelf claims our regard.
It is the front of Jove himself,
The majesty of virtue, not of power!
Before which guilt and meanness only cower.
Who can behold that bust and not exclaim,
Let everlasting honor claim our Clinton's name."

The bust which so moved the man who immortalized the bucket was not a notable affair. It suggested only vaguely the front of Jove. But there is a rather fine portrait of New York's first citizen, painted from life by George Catlin, which gives an idea of the man's towering impressiveness, that pictorial "splendor and majesty" which he shared with the nation's first citizen, George Washington; but the painting hangs in that now little-visited room in the City Hall, where New York for more than seventy years collected portraits of its great men and then, New-York-like, forgot all about them.

It is impossible, at least for this observer, to stand in front of this portrait without thinking that, if the American Revolution had been postponed (and we have seen that it was mere accident that it wasn't) to a time when George Washington was too old to lead the American forces, this man who was in the truest sense the father of his city might well have become the father of his country—impossible to doubt that, in the face of treachery and defeat, he would have stood impassively, as Washington did, at Valley Forge, or that, in the face of entrenched forces of privilege, he would have given us, as Jefferson finally did, a truly democratic republic.

It may be a trick of high lights and shadows, this pictorial effectiveness which inspires confidence and respect or, at least, wonder. But DeWitt Clinton's right to a niche in the Hall of Fame not too far to the right of center does not rest on mere pictorial effectiveness. Before Clinton, New York, for all its bustling ways, was a city with a small-town stamp, with an Appalachian-bounded hinterland; after Clinton, New York was a metropolis with a hinterland which was to know no western boundary but the Pacific.

It has frequently been noted in these pages—and cannot be too frequently noted, since it is the most important factor in the city's growth—that New York stood at those longitudinal and lati-

tudinal crossroads which predestined it ultimately to become the world's commercial and financial capital. Slowly, hestitatingly, New Yorkers had gone a long way toward eliminating the three-thousand-mile handicap of isolation by sea, but they had done nothing, when the nineteenth century opened, to overcome their three-thousand-mile isolation by land. There were ships on the sea; there were also ships on the Great Lakes. After the War of 1812, there were many of the latter, financed by New Yorkers, built and operated by New Yorkers, laden with the riches of the West. But what good could they do New York itself until a way was found to get the cargoes of the Great Lakes fleets to the wharves and into the holds of ships in New York harbor?

Transportation from the Lakes to Montreal cost only a third as much as the long overland carries to New York. Even the long voyage down the broad waters of the Mississippi to New Orleans, although longer, was cheaper. The obvious solution, of course, was a canal. Many had talked of it: Christopher Colles in 1773, but he found no backers; Gouverneur Morris in 1788 and General Philip Schuyler in 1791; but it wasn't until 1810, when DeWitt Clinton, then mayor of New York City, risked his entire political career by putting his weight behind the project, that anybody did anything about it.

An unpopular and little understood project from the first, it was promptly turned down by the legislature for fear of the high taxes it might involve and ridiculed by the press after this fashion:

> Oh, a ditch he would dig from the lakes to the sea,
> The Eighth of the world's matchless wonders to be.
> Good land! how absurd! But why should you grin?
> It will do to bury its mad author in.

And it nearly did. Politically discredited by his championship of this apparently utopian project, he retired to his Long Island farm, where, reportedly, he was seeking consolation in his excellent cellar, but actually he was planning a comeback, with the canal issue as his principal slogan, which landed him in the governor's seat at Albany and made possible the starting of the big dig.

"It remains for a free state to create a new era in history," wrote this man of vision, "and to erect a work more stupendous,

more magnificent, and more beneficial than has hitherto been achieved by the human race."

The gentleman may have overstated the case in his enthusiasm for the future of his native city. It is possible, as Thomas Jefferson thought, that a canal based on the Potomac River instead of the Hudson might have been as "great a fountain of public good and national abundance." But not for New York. So, to DeWitt Clinton's enterprise and foresight, backed by a facility in the English language which proved the soundness of his Columbia College salutatory, *De utilitate et necessitate studiorum Artium Liberalium,* New York City owes more of its greatness than to any other factors except the natural advantage of latitude and longitude, river and bay.

The digging, which began on July 4, 1817, took eight years. On October 26, 1825, the influx of the waters of Lake Erie into the canal was signalized by the booming of cannon at regular intervals between Buffalo and New York, and on November 4, after many banquets and bonfires along the way, DeWitt Clinton's brief hour of triumph struck. Accompanied by "a grand procession, consisting of nearly all the vessels in port, gayly decked with colors of all nations," and surrounded by a company of congratulatory officials and leading citizens, Clinton, standing on the deck of the canal boat *Seneca Chief,* emptied a bucket of lake water into the sea, and, summoning that command of formal English not equaled or approached before or since by any New Yorker save Alexander Hamilton, he said:

"This solemnity, at this place, on the first arrival of vessels from Lake Erie is intended to indicate and commemorate the navigable communication between our mediterranean seas and the Atlantic Ocean . . . and may the God of the heavens and the earth smile most propitiously on this work and render it subservient to the best interests of the human race."

God did smile—and most propitiously. The canal was an immediate success. The timid legislators' fears of increased tax levies was dissipated by the first year's tolls, which were well over $500,000 and paid more than 6 per cent on the investment; soon the annual tolls mounted to over $1,000,000. Profits of merchants and shippers increased even more rapidly. They were ready. Henry Eckford and his colleagues, returning from their Great Lakes

triumphs, had built shipyards that extended as far north as the present Tenth Street, and had also built sturdy ships, "broad of beam and blunt of brow," known to naval history as packets. Hitherto the term had meant any vessel which carried freight. Now it was applied exclusively to an innovation: a ship which sailed on schedule instead of when its hold happened to get filled with cargo.

First and most famous of these scheduled ships were the Black Ballers, which left New York, whether or no, on the first of every month. Managed by Isaac Wright and Jeremiah Thompson, these boats acquired a high reputation for efficiency and speed. They averaged twenty-two days from New York to Liverpool, forty days for the more difficult western trip. Competitors appeared, prospered. There were plenty of ships to take the wheat, cattle, lumber from the flat-bottomed boats which passed through "Clinton's Big Ditch." Life along the canal became busy, picaresque:

> Drop a tear for big-foot Sal,
> The best dam cook on the Erie Canal.
> She aimed to heaven but she went to hell—
> Fifteen years on the Erie Canal.
> The missioner said she died in sin;
> Hennery said it was too much gin;
> There warn't no bar where she hadn't been
> From Albany to Buffalo.

Big-foot Sal and her mates were a major influence in the growth of Detroit, Cleveland, Chicago, and ultimately far-north points like Duluth, but it was New York, chief beneficiary of their labors and dissipations, which burgeoned first and most. The harbor handled more than a third of the world's export trade. Five hundred new merchants started business in the first few months of 1825; twelve banks and thirteen marine insurance companies began business that year. Life in New York was not only quickening; it was growing, deepening; feeling the city's importance as the metropolis of the country.

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AND NOW FOR A QUICK LOOK AT SOME OF THE DEVELOPMENTS which followed fast on the year in which the New York Gas Light Company lit its first lamps and the waters of the Great Lakes, flowing through the Erie Canal, joined the waters of the Atlantic:

1826: Samuel Lord and George Washington Taylor, the original lords of Lord & Taylor, started a prosperous business on Catharine Street based on the sound American merchandising principle of "most superior quality to be sold on most reasonable terms."

1827: Arnold Constable's, founded in this year, might also have looked forward with justifiable pride to the part it was to play in manipulating the flotsam and jetsam of the fashionable modes: the leg o' mutton era of 1827, the crinoline vogue of 1837, the bustles of 1875, etc.

1827: Appeared at the Bowery Theatre, rival of the super-fashionable Park, one Madame Francisque Hutin, *"une jeune et jolie personne,"* in a "new style of French dancing," which involved an unprecedented amount of publicly exposed leg. It was reported that "the cheeks of the greater portion of the audience were crimsoned with shame, and every lady in the lower tier of boxes immediately left the house." Commented Samuel F. B. Morse, painter, telegrapher, and busybody: "The exhibition in question

is to all intents and purposes the *public exposure of a naked female*. . . . How much more offensive must these nuisances become before our Grand Jury will turn their attention to theatres as the most fruitful nurseries of vice?" Subsequent events tended to prove that Mr. Morse's naked female was a man.

1828: Bachelor Balls were the most exclusive social events, precursors of the modern Junior Assemblies, but based on the now lost principle of masculine eligibility—in contrast to our present affairs, which are based on a few hand-picked debs and a nondescript stag line recruited from the highways and hedges.

1829: Fanny Wright arrived from England, the 1829 Sylvia Pankhurst. Preaching free love along with some of the other freedoms, she was condemned by the *Commercial Advertiser* as "a bold blasphemer and a voluptuous preacher of licentiousness." The *Courier and Examiner* went even further: "There is a scandalous report about town, that Miss Epicene Wright has abstracted, or rather Agrarianized, a pair of Mr. Jennings' inexpressibles, and means to appear in them at her next lecture, which report says is to be delivered at the 'Sign of All Things Common,' Five Points."

1829: A century before Crater, New York had its first missing judge, Chancellor Livingston, reportedly, but not demonstrably, murdered.

1832: Prize couplet of the year:

> There is nothing in life so shocking
> As a fine girl with a hole in her stocking.

1833: Said the *Sun:* "The disposition for LOOKING WELL is ruining half the young people in the world—causing them to study their glasses and paint or patch, instead of pursuing that which is lasting and sound, the cultivation of the mind." And, as a horrible example of this "disposition," it offered this item:

"A circumstance of a singular nature occurred in this city a day or two since. A young lady, while sitting in conversation with several friends among whom were two young gentlemen, suddenly fell back in her chair, and for some time, until they could convey her to another room and loosen her clothes, her companions

thought her dead. She, however, recovered soon after her corsets were unlaced. Let this be a warning."

1833: Philip Hone, politician and diarist, forerunner of the modern columnist, told his public of an actor with a familiar name: "Mr. Tyrone Power, who came out from England with Stephen Price, made his first appearance this evening at the Park Theatre in the part of Sir Patrick O'Flaherty in 'The Irish Ambassador.' . . . He is the best Irishman I ever saw . . . with a rich natural brogue, a handy small figure, great vivacity and excellent stage manner."

NOTE: Columnist Hone occasionally had a kind word even for those whom others disliked. When Aaron Burr, through the valiant efforts of his daughter Theodosia, was permitted to return to New York and later, with typical Burr astuteness, married Madame Jumel of the famous mansion, Hone said: "It is benevolent of her to keep the old man in his latter days. One good turn deserves another." But on those whom he himself disliked, he could be most acidulous. Commenting on the Democrats' opposition to a bill designed to reduce election frauds in New York City, he wrote: "James J. Roosevelt, the leader of the blackguards, in whose person as its representative, our poor city is disgraced . . . resorts to every species of vile, disgraceful conduct and language, in which he is supported by the whole pack."

(Which reminds us not only that there were Roosevelt haters in the 1800's as well as in the 1900's, but that New York's royal family was continuing to add to the birth records of the former period: the F.D.R. line in 1828, at Hyde Park, with James II, father of Franklin; and the T.R. line, in 1831, with Theodore I, father of Teddy.)

1833: "New York of 1833—a New York enjoying the novelty of steel pens, friction matches, gas lights, mint juleps, hard coal, bathtubs, Indiarubber shoes, the 'improprieties' of waltzing and the selling of roast chestnuts in the streets."—The *Sun*.

1833: According to the WPA boys, who were quick to spot such things, "the first city-wide, central organization of trade unions in America was established in New York in 1833. It was named the General Trades' Union of the City of New York and its

Vicinity." They also found in succeeding years such additional signs of labor's awakening as these: "Carpet weavers went on strike in 1834 when their wages were reduced." "In 1835 the female bookbinders went out on strike for higher wages." "In 1835, New York sail-makers went on strike against an increase in working hours." The *New York Journal of Commerce* "viewed with alarm" these "turnout" operations "in the different trades and combined together in which is called a Trade Union."

1834: The better hostesses served pincushions with the soup to enable fair guests to keep sleeves out of same.

1834: A small group, mostly Quakers, won the support of influential citizens like Anson G. Phelps, Hamilton Fish, Peter Pinckney, and Peter G. Stuyvesant, and secured a charter for the first poor man's savings bank, now the largest nongovernment savings institution in the world, the Bowery.

1834: Until this year the mayor of New York City had been appointed by the governor of New York State. In the first mayoralty election, Tammany-inspired riots in the sixth ward, "The Bloody Sixth," reached a point where it was necessary to call out one detachment of infantry and two squadrons of cavalry. C. W. Lawrence, the Tammany candidate, squeaked through by a small majority. The Whigs carried the Common Council. This was known as "The Year of Riots," not only because of this election disturbance but because of the mobbing of abolitionists and the sacking of churches whose pastors preached against slavery. New Yorkers didn't want slaves themselves, but those doing business with the cotton interests in the South didn't want their associates prevented from using slave labor. As was so often the case, profits, not principles, were at stake.

1835: This was "The Year of the Great Fire." The conflagration started in a store on Merchant Street, one of the narrowest of the old Dutch city's narrow thoroughfares, and spread until it had burned down 674 buildings at a loss variously estimated between $20,000,000 and $40,000,000, and laid waste nineteen city blocks, almost the entire territory bounded by Wall Street, Broad Street, the harbor, and the East River. To contemporaries the damage seemed irreparable.

1835: James Gordon Bennett founded the *New York Herald* in a basement on Nassau Street. The sole office equipment was said to be two barrels, a long board, and a chair. Said friend Hone: "There is an ill-looking, squinting man called Bennett . . . now editor of the *Herald,* one of the penny papers hawked about the streets by a gang of troublesome ragged boys, and in which scandal is retailed to all who delight in it at that moderate price."

1835: Tammany braves got to fighting among themselves. One faction walked out of a meeting and shut off the gas as they went. The faction that remained lit the type of matches then in vogue, called locofocos, and were thereafter known by that name. One of the leaders of the bolting faction owned an entirely legal moniker quite as curious. Having been saved from drowning while still a baby by a fisherman who knew nothing of his identity, he was promptly christened Preserved Fish.

1836: No longer kept in his last years by the benevolent Madame Jumel, Aaron Burr died in comparative poverty in the old St. James Hotel at Port Richmond, Staten Island.

1836: The city government was, as usual, running at a loss. Expenditures of $1,120,500 exceeded receipts by $800,000. The funded debt was already $2,480,000.

1836: James Watson Webb, Bennett's former employer, attacked him in Wall Street and beat him up. Battles between eminent newspaper editors were frequent occurrences in these times, and James Gordon was a provocative person: he was later to call Horace Greeley "a galvanized squash." Webb himself, a former army officer, was also on the belligerent side: he was subsequently wounded while trying to kill a congressman in a duel, an understandable although reprehensible act.

1836: Astor built the Astor House just north of St. Paul's on Broadway. For fifty years it was one of New York's leading hotels. Andrew Jackson, Daniel Webster, Henry Clay, Macready, Irving, Hawthorne, Dickens, Jenny Lind were among its earliest guests. The eighty-foot black-walnut rotunda bar was famous throughout the country. So was its magnificent restaurant. Prices in the latter, however, were considered outrageous: steamed clams, 35¢; prime

ribs of beef, 50¢; Virginia ham boiled in cider with new spinach, 75¢; Scotch, rye or bourbon, 15¢.

1836: Prints of this period reveal Negro messengers carrying strings of boots, presumably to be shined, along Broadway sidewalks.

1836: Not liking either play or players, an audience drove Mr. and Mrs. Wood, respectively leading man and leading woman, out of the Park Theatre.

1836: Before the end of this year, twelve months after the Great Fire, the town was almost completely rebuilt. It was no longer Dutch.

1837: Panic closed twenty-three local banks. During the bank holiday John Jacob Astor foreclosed sixty mortgages, cleaned up.

1837: August Belmont arrived from Germany to head the American branch of Rothschild's, became the town's biggest banker. His firm headed all important lists of brokers making public stock offerings until 1879, when it gave way to the House of Morgan.

1837: The verb "to swartwout" entered the English language when Samuel Swartwout, Tammany collector of the port, got away to Europe with considerably over a million dollars in public funds. The office of United States district attorney this same year was worth a paltry $72,124.06 to Tammany Bill Price, but it was enough to enable him to join Swartwout in Europe.

1838: Politics in general were about as usual. Prostitution, gambling, etc., were good for $600,000 a year in "honest graft." Repeaters at the polls averaged $30 for a good day's work.

1838: S.S. *Sirius,* 178 feet long, manned by a near-mutinous crew held in check with a loaded revolver by her commander, one Lieutenant Roberts, established the first westbound transatlantic steam passenger ship record, sixteen and one-half days out of Cork.

1840: In or about this year, Palmo's Opera House in Chambers Street behind the sandstone backside of the City Hall survived briefly as the home of Italian opera.

1840: Alvin Adams, equipped with two carpetbags, began carrying parcels between New York and Boston. Result: the Adams Express Company.

1840: Mademoiselle Fanny Elssler, the period's Pavlova, arrived to perform at the Park Theatre after being warned by the French press that "she would receive no favor here—our notions were so prudish that anything like an abbreviated garment would be visited with national wrath." The wrath wasn't notable. The box-office receipts were.

1842: The Croton aqueduct began to supply the city with drinkable water. The Croton Jubilee Quickstep got a big play. Prints in the Eno collection show pigs scampering through City Hall Park at the head of a procession celebrating the opening of the aqueduct.

1842: Charles Dickens visited America and wrote his *American Notes.* New Yorkers welcomed the former, regurgitated after reading the latter. Mr. Dickens didn't care much for Manhattan Toe, which he considered "by no means so clean a city as Boston."

1846: Restrained at first by the Fulton-Livingston steamboat monopoly and later by the obstinacy of its own shipbuilders, New York still stood off the challenge of steam, and by encouraging the vogue of the finest and fastest commercial sailing craft ever launched, the American clippers, it kept its shore lines securely "mast-hemmed."

1849: While the battle of steam and sail was being waged by stubborn New Yorkers on the high seas, a far more acrimonious contest was being waged over a hitherto somewhat neglected metropolitan topic, the works of William Shakespeare. One camp believed, and expressed its belief with appropriate vociferousness, that the bard's immortal lines were best spoken by America's own favorite tragedian, Mr. Edwin Forrest, a lusty, robustious actor, who interpreted Shakespeare by tearing him into vocal tatters. The other camp followed as its leader a more gentle knight, England's beloved Charles Macready. Riots inside and outside the theaters in which these giants played were frequent. On one occasion the disturbance to the public peace was not quelled

until the Seventh Regiment had been called out, more than a score of theater-loving citizens killed, and many more severely wounded.

1849: *Almanac* note: "Persons leaving for California [in the gold rush] were advised to take tombstones with them."

1849: As evidenced by announcements printed in the *American Advertiser,* copywriters in 1849 were chiefly interested in devices for the alleviation of man's—and woman's—physical ills:

> Dr. Banning's "Patent Lace," or Body Brace, Improved, is an efficient relief to persons laboring under the following and *analagous* maladies and symptoms:
>
> Weakness and Roughness of Voice Weakness of the Lungs and Chest Palpitation of the Heart, A Ghastly Deathlike Sinking Dull Dragging Pains in the Side Costiveness, Piles and Chronic Diarrhoe Debility about the Hips and Lower Extremities Pains and Weakness in the Back Curvature of the Spine, Falling of the Bowels and Female Weakness.

Inclusive as these claims may seem, the following was the neatest attempt to make a hole in one:

> Dr. Ralph's Pills, the universal, Domestic Vegetable medicine, being founded on the ONLY PRINCIPLE in NATURE on which such a remedy can be *safely* and *conscientiously* recommended to the world, ARE PROPER IN ALL CASES and ALONE sufficient for the cure of Most.

And Jno. Thomas, Cork Leg Maker, did not do so badly in optimism when he proclaimed: "Loss of Feet and Legs no Hindrance to the Art of Walking."

1849: Lady Emmeline Wortley visited our city, was impressed. "There are numerous superior shops in Broadway," she wrote, "but the most preeminently magnificent is 'Stewart's.' It is one of the finest structures I ever saw, its front being composed entirely of white marble. Mr. Stewart is going to add immensely to this splendid store, and it will occupy almost as much space as the Pallazzo Doria at Rome. Crowds of carriages, private and public, are to be seen in Broadway, passing and repassing every moment,

filled with ladies beautifully dressed in the most elaborate Parisian toilets."

1849: In this year was born Emma Lazarus, who wrote the inspired words preserved for posterity within the pedestal of Bartholdi's Statue of Liberty. Not always America's credo, they have always been New York's:

> Give me your tired, your poor,
> Your huddled masses, yearning to breathe free,
> The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
> Send here the homeless, tempest-tost to me.
> I lift my lamp beside the golden door.

1849: Peace came to the amusement world. Phineas T. Barnum imported Jenny Lind to sing at Castle Garden. And all New York worshiped at her feet. Her debut (which didn't take place until 1850) was an event. Genin the Hatter, whose store was on Broadway near St. Paul's, purchased the first ticket for $225, and John Bostwick Moreau, in his "Shakespeare Calendar," averred with Pericles that "I do protest my ears were never better fed with such delightful, pleasing harmony."

1849: In this same year, G. P. Putnam, 155 Broadway, published a book by one E. Porter Belden, M.A., which enunciated a theory which, though very possibly true, has never been wholeheartedly accepted by the American public. Writing of what went on in the Wall Street of his day, Master of Arts Belden said: "There are men whose lives are spent in the midst of such pursuits, who are not unduly influenced by the desire of gain, and who are as honorable and conscientious in their dealings as any portion of the community."

Also, reported Mr. Belden, the Battery "draws within its precincts by a more irresistible attraction the young men and maidens of our own day, whose breasts are heaving with tender emotions, as well as all of whatever age, sex or condition in life who desire to avoid the noise and dust of the busy metropolis."

1850: The truthful *Tribune* stated that 18,456 persons in the city were living in 8,141 cellars. Bricklayers and plasterers, always among the best-paid of artisans, got their courage up to refusing

to work for less than two dollars a day. The average New York family was struggling along on less than six hundred dollars a year.

1851: Buildings with cast-iron façades, sheet-iron cornices, and wrought-iron fences were appearing in the town. Tin roofs were replacing shingles on many structures.

1852: The New York Central Railroad reached Albany. Lola Montez, dancer and adventuress, reached Manhattan Toe.

1853: Said Columnist Hone: "The great book establishment of the Brothers Harper, No. 22 Cliff Street, was discovered to be on fire at four o'clock.

1854: Mr. Cyrus W. Field, having retired from his junk business at 91 Beekman Street, conceived the idea of an Atlantic cable, and began prowling Wall Street in search of the elusive backer.

1854: Mr. Robert Bonner hired Fanny Fern to write a daily piece for his New York *Ledger*. She thought up most of her articles while brushing her hair. Bonner loved fast horses, but puritanically refused to race them on the tracks.

1854: Tiffany's, which had been started in 1837 as a fancy goods and stationery shop, had already begun its triumphal march uptown; was located in 1854 at 550 Broadway; would move again in 1870 to Union Square. Somewhere along the way the firm added a jewelry department.

1855: Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* appeared and was little thought of; a similar fate had greeted Melville's *Moby Dick* in 1851.

1855: Immigration authorities took over Castle Garden, and, as already noted, the Academy of Music, way uptown at Fourteenth Street, took over the city's night life.

1856: From an election circular of this year: "Irishmen to your post, or you'll lose America. By perseverance you may become its rulers. By negligence you will become its slaves. . . . Vote the tickets of Alexander Stewart, Alderman; Edward Flanagan, assessor; both true Irishmen." The Irishers were unduly concerned.

Almost ninety years later, Erin-born William O'Dwyer was beating a Goldstein and a Morris by a plurality of nearly seven hundred thousand votes for the boss seat at City Hall.

1857: There were no skyscrapers on Manhattan Toe in 1857, but even six-story buildings presented transportation problems. Several claimed the honor of the first elevator.

1858: Chief obstetrical event of this year was the birth of Theodore (Teddy) Roosevelt. Chief social event was the Hippodrome Schottische.

1859: Daniel Decatur Emmett, needing a new walk-around tune for his minstrel show, sat down in his lodgings on Catherine Street one afternoon and dashed off "Dixie."

1860: Baron Renfrew, distinguished immigrant known in his own country as Prince of Wales, landed at Castle Garden. Nineteen-year-old Albert Edward, afterward Edward VII, danced with everybody's grandmother at that ball to end all balls in the new Academy of Music.

1860: New York spent more than a hundred thousand dollars on an official welcome to the first Japanese mission to America. On this occasion, the Japs arrived only after due warning!

1861: There were more than a million people in the city of New York.

30

ROBERT MOSES, THE CITY'S ALWAYS ABLE AND ALWAYS ARTICULATE park commissioner, tells a story of a Congressional junket to New York at the expense of the late World's Fair which illustrates a point which has frequently been mentioned in this narrative—the non-New Yorker's instinctive distrust of New York's bigness and foreignness.

"One Representative," says Mr. Moses, "took his small boy to the top of the Empire State Building. The boy was in raptures and said to his father: 'Dad, this is the most beautiful thing in the country.' The Representative squelched the boy with this venomous reply: 'Son, this isn't even part of the United States.'"

Presumably the Congressman, and almost certainly his son—for such matters are seldom allowed to seep into the history textbooks—would be surprised to learn how close this statement came to being literally true in January, 1861, when Mayor Fernando Wood, amid enthusiastic applause from the Common Council, proposed that New York City secede from the Union and form an independent nation of its own.

Proposed territory: Manhattan Island, Staten Island, Long Island.

Proposed name: Tri-Insula.

This secession measure, urged in all seriousness by Mayor Wood, preceded by three months the firing on Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor.

To understand these bizarre proceedings it is necessary to understand municipal government in America—which is impossible. No one has ever been able to take it apart and see what makes it tick, if it does. Within the memory of middle-aged men, Big Bill Thompson was several times elected mayor of Chicago on a platform consisting mainly of Bill's promise to beat up George V of England, a kindly old gentleman who never heard of Bill and probably had only the vaguest notion as to what Chicago was, or why. Similarly, Fernando Wood, who celebrated his election by marrying a sixteen-year-old girl, had slipped into City Hall on an issue which, at first glance, would seem to have concerned no one north of the Mason and Dixon line.

Apparently, Tammany Hall and Mayor Fernando Wood's vest-pocket organization, Mozart Hall, feared nothing so much as the abolition of slavery in the solid South. This attitude was due partly to an unreasoning but persistent hatred of the Negro race; and partly to the accident that the Democratic party in the nation depended for its continued existence on the votes of the slave-owning electorate; but mostly to the fact that the rich and influential members of both halls were selfishly concerned with maintaining the *status quo* in the economy of the slave-owning states. The Mayor spoke for them all when he said:

"What will become of our great commercial interests so closely interwoven with Southern prosperity? The hundreds of millions of Northern capital invested in Southern productions—the wealth which is now annually accumulated by the people of the North, and especially New York, out of the labor of slavery—the profit, the luxury, the comforts, the necessity, nay, even the very physical existence depending on products only to be obtained by the continuance of slave labor and the prosperity of the slave master?"

To assure the continuance of that prosperity, and their own, Wood and the Halls used every Tammany trick at the polls to assure the defeat of Abraham Lincoln; and when the tricks, although successful in the city, failed to carry the country, the tricksters thought nothing of taking the only step open to them, the breaking up of the nation. Predicting not only the secession of the South but of the Midwest and Far West, the Mayor declared the principle of disunion "fixed."

"Why," he wrote, "To the Honorable the Common Council,"

"should not New York City, instead of supporting by her contributions in revenue two-thirds of the expenses of the United States, become also equally independent? As a free city, but with but a nominal duty on imports, her local government could be supported without taxation upon her people. Thus we could live free from taxes, and have cheap goods nearly duty free."

The worthy councilmen, we are told, became thoroughly excited over this paradisiacal, albeit traitorous, proposal, promptly caused the Mayor's "emancipation proclamation" to be printed and distributed among the peasantry, and prepared to sleep well of nights.

But like George III, Fernando I underestimated the astuteness of the citizens of New York—especially those citizens who had their places of business in that brief area between the Battery and the Fields. It would be nice to report that it was a wave of patriotism which swept these worthies into action. No doubt, with some, patriotism was a propelling force. But most of the individuals concerned, X-rayed as they have been by the passage of time, were so little given to sentiment of any kind that this seeker after truth cannot ignore the intrusion of a self-interest even more deeply rooted than the politicians'.

Wood and his mates saw in peace, purchased even at the price of secession, an immediate profit. Commodore Vanderbilt, Daniel Drew, and *their* mates saw in war an El Dorado beyond the political lame brains' most golden dreams. On such issues, and such issues only, do wars seem to be waged and won.

Torn between these conflicting selfish interests, or happily unconscious of them, the good people of New York staggered into war, struggled to do right. Fathers, brothers, sons promptly enlisted and marched away to what they believed would be a three-months' conquest of the South. Patriotic women cooked and danced to feed and entertain the regiments from Connecticut and Massachusetts and upstate New York that marched with banners flying down Broadway to Manhattan Toe. The Battery became a place of embarkation and disembarkation of Union troops throughout the war. Battery Park and often the Fields, now called City Hall Park, became armed camps. Children were enthralled by these unaccustomed sights.

Further uptown in Union Square, the Union League Club,

formed in 1862 on a platform of "absolute and unqualified loyalty to the government and unwavering support of its effort for the suppression of the rebellion," labored prodigiously with the cooperation of the respectable bankers on Manhattan Toe to keep the nation's wartime treasury full. Largely by its efforts—the members contributing generously and going security for contributions promised by others—New York City raised the unprecedented sum of $210,000,000 to help carry on the war.

Less practical-minded do-gooders rallied to the cause in ways that at least showed community good will. Those of us who have seen the metropolis muddle through two wars can imagine the feverish atmosphere in which these earnest folk conducted their activities. When New York organized forty-two relief committees in the first ten days after Pearl Harbor—most of them quite unnecessary—she was simply running true to form. Life in our city is always exciting, and frequently excited.

To this quality may be attributed in part the disgraceful draft riots of 1863, which did so much to solidify the feeling throughout the North that New York just could not be depended upon "in the pinch." President Lincoln's conscription proclamation of May, 1863, was not popular anywhere in the country. Conscription seldom is. Minor disturbances occurred in Boston and other cities. But in New York major riots lasting three days followed the attempt in July to put the Draft Act into effect. Fifty-odd buildings were burned, property damage close to two million dollars was inflicted, and over a thousand people were killed. Many members of that race which the unreasoning mobsters looked upon as the primary cause of all their troubles were publicly lynched.

Blame for this orgy of violence cannot be ascribed solely to New York's well-known determination to be first, even in evil. Tammany's long campaign, dating back to its early years on Manhattan Toe, of incitement against the Negro race must shoulder a good share of it. So, too, must the money-changers in the Wall Street temple.

The Draft Act, as originally drawn, fell on rich and poor alike. In fact, it was an unusually fair piece of legislation for a period in which rich men counted their senators and representatives as poor men counted their pennies, only in greater numbers. But

somewhere along the way, allegedly by command of the financial giants on Manhattan Toe, a joker crept into the bill which exempted anyone rich enough to hire a substitute from the provisions of the draft, but left the man who was not that rich—which was most people—with no alternative but to serve and, mayhap, die.

The injustice of this provision was, perhaps, more galling to the man in the New York street than to any other because he was closer to the nation's concentrated wealth and had experienced earlier instances of its power. There was a political factor, too: Democrats claimed that Republicans on the draft boards had stuffed the lists with a disproportionate number of Democratic names. And a highly emotional, recently arrived, and still unassimilated foreign-born population that didn't understand what it was all about still further complicated the situation.

The rioting began well uptown from Manhattan Toe with the wrecking of a provost marshal's office on Forty-sixth Street and the burning of a Negro orphan asylum on Fifth Avenue between Forty-third and Forty-fourth Streets, but presently some bright lad conceived the idea of killing the police, and led the mob down Broadway toward police headquarters in Mulberry Street, where two hundred coppers armed with night sticks drove them off by the simple strategy of breaking their skulls. Those who escaped, however, invaded Park Row with the announced intention of wrecking both the office of the *Tribune* and the distinguished editor thereof. Bullets and bayonets of New York regiments (hastily recalled from the front) frustrated that purpose, and, after a brief suspension of drafting activities, reduced the Manhattan rebels to a state of passive nonresistance.

Meanwhile, the Wall Street "patriots," beneficiaries most of them of the tricky draft exemption, had not been idle. Some of them, of course, were overage. The Commodore himself was old the day he was born; now he was crowding the allotted three score years and ten. Uncle Daniel Drew was also well over sixty. But Gould, Fisk, and the men we know as the elder Morgan and the elder John D. Rockefeller (aged respectively twenty-five, twenty-seven, twenty-four, and twenty-two) were mere broths of boys, presumably sound in wind and limb, and as capable as any of shouldering a musket or stopping a bullet. The fact that these

young bloods stayed at home and got rich, while poor men went to the front and got dead, does not make pleasant reading. At the time, however, it had its defenders.

"It is only greenhorns who enlist," Judge Thomas Mellon of Pittsburgh wrote his son. "In time you will understand and believe that a man may be a patriot without risking his own life or sacrificing his health. There are plenty of other lives less valuable or others ready to serve for the love of serving."

How far we of this war generation are qualified to sit in calm judgment on the generation that did or did not fight the Civil War is open to question. To connive with venal congressmen to wangle exemption from physical danger for a privileged few would, of course, have been cowardly chicanery. That was what the mobsters thought had happened, what very likely did happen; but there is no proof. So far as the individuals go who are mentioned in these pages, the most that can truthfully be said about them is that most of them availed themselves of a privilege which was granted to them by the law of the land. How many of our war generation, granted the same privilege, would have acted the same way, we have no way of knowing. The betting is good, though, that there would have been many—and from the ranks of those whom we have been taught to call "our best people."

But this book is a history, not a crusade. And from the historical standpoint the fact of greatest significance for us would seem to be that any story of Manhattan Toe must concern itself, not with the "Boys of '61" who fought their way from Bull Run to Appomattox Courthouse, but with the "Boys of '61" who stayed at home and made the fortunes and shaped the policies which for generations dominated the daily life not only of the Toe, but of the nation.

It is impossible to discount the importance of these men. More than any other group, they brought home to the American people the kind of industrialized nation they had become. Thomas Jefferson, who mistrusted cities even more than he did kings, had thought that he was fashioning a nation of happy agriculturists, each of whom should be free to do as he liked, except for a sort of glorified rural constabulary to keep him from stealing the other fellow's cows and chicks. "A wise and frugal government," he said, "which shall restrain men from injuring each other . . . is

Courtesy of the Museum of the City of New York

ARRIVAL OF THE *GREAT WESTERN* FROM BRISTOL, APRIL 23, 1838

(The *Sirius* arrived from Cork the day before, these being the first two ships to make the Atlantic voyage under steam alone.)

From the J. Clarence Davies Collection, Museum of the City of New York

THE PAPPRILL VIEW FROM ST PAUL'S CHAPEL, 1848

(Aquatint by J. W. Hill, engraved by Henry Papprill)

[all that is] necessary to close the circle of our felicities." But by 1861, it was clear to almost everybody on Manhattan Toe, and in most other parts of the country except the South, that Jeffersonian felicities had not developed according to plan.

The country simply refused to stay rural. It became, instead, definitely commercial and industrial. The South alone adhered to Jefferson's bucolic notions: actually, in its manner of earning a living; and theoretically, in its ideas of how the country should be run. The latter fact was increasingly a menace to the industrial North, for, curiously, the South had a lot more to say about running the country than the North had. The Southerners' Northern allies, greedy, shortsighted men like Fernando Wood, were of course essential to this continued control. But the South's strongest card, which enabled it to take almost every political trick, was prestige.

Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, Jackson, Clay, Calhoun—these were the great names of America's political history, the names people remembered and swore by; and they were all Southerners. Hamilton and Burr had killed each other off, and were forgotten. Ben Franklin was remembered chiefly as a combination Horatio Alger hero and Will Rogers dispenser of homely aphorisms. Except for Daniel Webster, who, many thought, sold his statesman's toga for a mess of oratorical pottage, the North had not produced a major political figure since the Adams boys moved back to Boston and oblivion.

In short, the agricultural South ran the country. And the industrial North, both in population and wealth, *was* the country.

Obviously, this absurdly paradoxical situation could not continue indefinitely. Equally obviously, since neither party was likely to give in willingly to the other, there was small chance of resolving it without something very like a war. The cleavage would have come about on strictly economic lines even if the South had voluntarily freed every Negro slave between the Potomac and the Gulf. To be sure, the abolitionists needled the slave-owners with sharp jabs of assumed moral superiority until the average Southerner couldn't look at a black man without seeing red. This may have accounted for the nervousness which made the South fire the first shot. But war was inevitable. It was impossible that the industrial North should remain a prone giant, a Gulliver

harnessed to the earth by agricultural Lilliputians. If the South hadn't rebelled, the North would surely have done so.

Chief victims of the prewar political setup had been the daytime inhabitants of Manhattan Toe. Other parts of the country realized that something revolutionary was happening, but were not so aware of what that something was. Wall Streeters, on the other hand, were in daily contact with the industrial leaders of the country; some of them *were* those leaders; all of them made or lost money in direct ratio to the scope those leaders were given for their activities. They, more than any other group, stood to profit by the dislodgment of the farmer-minded South from the driving seat of the wagon of state. Just as they had been the chief victims, they were now the chief beneficiaries. Finding their hands free to use, they used them. They became the shock troops of the industrial revolution, and New York became its arsenal.

The New York way of life, that's what the war was about. The boys in blue didn't know it; if they had, a goodly lot of them would have laid down their arms. The men in Boston—William Lloyd Garrison, Wendell Phillips, Charles Sumner—didn't know it, either; they thought the war was being fought to free the slaves. Actually, it was being fought to make the world safe for New Yorkracy.

31

AND WHO WERE THE MEN OF MANHATTAN TOE WHO REPRESENTED the New Yorkracy of the sixties and seventies?

Well, we have already glimpsed Commodore Vanderbilt earning his title by commanding a Staten Island ferry, earning a fortune by owning a Hudson River night boat. Most of his contemporaries seemed to think that the kind of ship he was best fitted to operate should sail under a skull and crossbones. His most famous remark he never made. "The public be damned" fell from the lips of his much milder son, William H. But the old man's philosophy was in no way antagonistic to this statement.

He was a great hulking brute of a man, blustering, ignorant, profane; handsome in a rough way, with a high balding head above shrewd, slitty eyes; a striking figure in his fur coat and plug hat. Graduate of the hard school of the harbor and the water front, he couldn't spell, but he could fight. His physical courage was unquestioned. He was as tough as he was arrogant. The boys on Water Street found that out. So did the boys in Wall Street.

"What do I care about the law?" he shouted. "Hain't I got the power?"

Although remembered now as a railroad man, as builder of the New York Central and as one of the wreckers of the Erie, he was initially and essentially a shipper. He made the nucleus of his vast fortune out of mail subsidies which he wangled for his own lines and tribute he was able to levy on the less favored lines

of others. (Uninhibited modern critics have described these operations as blackmail.) He profited hugely through his shipping operations, and, when war broke out, had acquired a fortune in excess of ten million dollars, a flashy figure for those days.

There is evidence that he did not worsen his money situation between 1861 and 1865. Vanderbilt historians have sought to cover the old pirate's wartime activities with a neat coat of patriotic camouflage. Some have even tried wrapping his ample figure in the American flag. I am not sure that they haven't done the old gentleman a disservice. He was a gaudy old party to begin with, and, so far as this observer can see, did nothing himself during the war years to change his spots or conceal them. But for all his sins, he was a forthright sort, who did not lend himself to protective coloring, let alone flag-wrapping. He did do a bit of dollar-a-yearing in Washington as a buyer of ships with government money. And what ships! And at what prices! And from whom? If he made a dirty dollar on his deals, you can bet he was proud of it, and if he made a million dirty dollars, he was prouder still.

One thing can be said for the old Commodore. He was unshakable in his belief in the economic future of the country. In the market he was a bull; in industry he was a builder. In neither activity did he pretend to be altruistic or even honest. The Charles Francis Adams who was current in Cornelius' day is authority for the statement that "$50,000 of absolute water had been poured out for each mile of road between New York and Buffalo." It is true that he watered his stocks shamelessly, especially his pet New York Central. Nevertheless, the road played a major role in developing the country, and its earnings paid dividends on the watered stock. So, if we can find nothing else to admire about the Commodore, we can at least remember that he believed in America.

Uncle Daniel Drew didn't believe in anything. To be sure, he said he believed in God, proclaimed it unremittingly, but obviously he didn't believe in God's power to save mankind, since every act of his long and gloomy career was a denial of that power. Never was he known to help raise the market value of a stock as much as a point unless it were to tempt another batch of suckers who would subsequently get caught in the downward

rush of some security which he was manipulating for his own profit. Matthew Josephson, in *The Robber Barons,* gives this instance of the extremes he was willing to go to in his pursuit of the unwary:

> In an uptown club one hot day, at a moment when he was supposed to be hard pressed in the market, Old Daniel pulled out his proverbial red bandanna handkerchief to mop his brow before sitting down with his fellow speculators. A slip of paper bearing a "point," or tip, fell to the floor; a bystander put his foot on it. As Drew left, apparently not noticing the incident, the others pounced on the piece of paper, which proved to be an order. They bought Erie stock in large quantities, and were soon gulled. This is the "handkerchief trick."

Physically, Drew was the complete droop. All the lines of his bewhiskered, cadaverous face and long, lanky body were downward lines. Narrow-shouldered, hollow-cheeked, tight-lipped, shifty-eyed, he threw off an aura of caution, timidity, petty meanness. As costive a specimen of *homo sapiens* as Rollin Kirby's famous cartoon creation of the congenital prohibitionist. Yet behind this unpromising exterior was the cunning brain of a Philadelphia lawyer and the unexpectedly stout heart of a Mississippi gambler. He was not so successful as Vanderbilt because he had hold of the wrong end of the stick, but he was more dangerous. Where Vanderbilt built, Drew destroyed.

Two qualities only had he in common with his great rival. Suspicion: neither man, although he dealt in vast sums and vast complexities, would trust a bookkeeper; each carried in his head all the minutiae of his transactions. And ruthlessness: Vanderbilt said, "What do I care about the law?" and Drew matched it with "Can't I do what I want with my own?" Also, as a sort of epitaph for the poor souls he was forever catching on the "short" side of the market, he is said to have composed this characteristic couplet:

> He who sells what isn't his'n
> Must buy it back or go to prison.

Uncle Daniel had almost as many and varied interests as the Commodore, but his meal ticket was the Erie Railroad, which has one of the shortest roadbeds of any major United States line,

yet has taken more people for more rides than any other railroad in the country. Daniel didn't know anything about railroads. He may never have traveled on one. In his youth he was a drover. He is said to have entered New York driving a herd of cattle belonging to trusting Putnam County farmers. He filled the cattle with water to increase their weight, then sold them by the pound and forgot to turn over the proceeds to the owners. He never went back to the farm. He never went anywhere. He stayed in his Wall Street foxhole and played games with Erie stock certificates.

They were profitable games, for Daniel. He didn't add a mile to the Erie's roadbed or a car to its rolling stock, but he became an absolute master of its securities. Said Wall Street: "Daniel says 'up'—Erie goes up. Daniel says 'down'—Erie goes down. Daniel says 'wiggle-waggle'—it bobs both ways." But, in the end, being Daniel, he always said "down." "The Sphinx of Wall Street" had reached this pinnacle of power when he begot himself two promising pupils, Jay Gould and Jim Fisk.

These two young men were as different in their ways as the two old men, Drew and Vanderbilt, were in theirs. According to the late Robert H. Fuller, lifetime friend of Fisk, who wrote the entertaining book *Jubilee Jim,* the contrast between Jim and Gould was complete: "Jim was florid and fond of the table, a weakness that was beginning to show in his figure. Gould was abstemious. Jim was loud and self-confident; Gould was silent and seemed diffident. Jim was bold; Gould was cautious. Jim said what he thought; Gould kept his mouth shut. Jim liked to spend his money; Gould kept his. Jim was generous and open-handed; Gould wasn't."

A pro-Fisk picture, obviously. It is doubtful, though, if Gould would have fared better at the hands of anyone who knew both men. Jim Fisk was the expansive type, with the deceptively ingratiating manner which comes easy to the fat man. Gould, on the other hand, though not as dour as Drew, was almost as forbidding. Thin as the old man but small, he moved with a stealthy grace, furtive as a cat is furtive. The only generous physical attribute the man had was the beard which concealed most of his dark-skinned, small-boned face; one had the impression that he wore it less as an adornment than as a mask. Nothing, however,

could conceal the searching blackness of his eyes; they were the eyes of a prowler.

Henry Adams said Gould was a Jew. That, I think, has been the general impression. But Mr. Josephson says no: Gould was a Yankee. Perhaps he was a Yankee Jew. He exhibited few of the finer qualities common to both types of ancestry, but he possessed most of the less desirable ones in concentrated doses. When it came to money, and it always did come to money with Jay Gould, he possessed the acquisitiveness of all the races of the earth. An unpleasant little man. Nobody loved him, except Gould.

It is not easy to make excuses for the Jay Gould type. But it has been done. They usually take the form of detailing the hard life he led as a child in a poverty-stricken home—which is silly, because some of the finest characters in history have emerged from just such childhoods in just such harsh surroundings. Philosophers from earliest times have held that poverty is the mother of manhood, the stepmother of genius. It is certainly the great teacher. But the only thing that it taught the kind of child that Jay Gould must have been was the determination not to be poor. He persuaded his father, who would have no truck with education, to send him to public school. He worked industriously keeping books for the local tradesmen, and won admission to a reputable academy near his home in the Catskill Mountains. He assimilated knowledge of which Commodore Vanderbilt, who couldn't spell, and Uncle Daniel Drew, who could scarcely read, were utterly and happily ignorant.

He was enterprising and ingenious, too, in the way he combined his acquired training with his natural gifts. He even invented a new kind of mousetrap! But he was not one to wait for the world to make a path to his door. He took his mousetrap mind to Manhattan Toe, where he promptly hynotized an aged leather merchant, one Leupp, into investing upward of a hundred thousand dollars in a tannery to be built and operated by his twenty-year-old protégé. The tannery did a big business but paid no dividends *to Leupp*. When the crash came, the old man died, presumably of shock. But Gould didn't die. He transferred his office from Lehigh, Pennsylvania, to Manhattan Toe, and his activities from tanning one sucker to tanning many.

He was doing well enough at his new profession, but was hardly

in the big money, when he met Jim Fisk and, through Fisk, Drew. This order of events has been disputed. Some say Gould already knew Drew. Perhaps he did. But he had no intimate acquaintance with him and certainly no alliance until he teamed up with Jubilee Jim, who had ingratiated himself into the old man's confidence, and was known in the Street as the Drew broker.

Jim's rise had been spectacular. At an early age he ran away from his home in Brattleboro, Vermont, because his father made him clean out the stables. He ran away with a menagerie, and began cleaning up after a couple of elephants and an orangutan. Then he started a kind of show of his own. He took over his father's tin-peddler's business, and streamlined it—four white horses, shining brasses, a long whip that cracked like a pistol, a Yankee peddler in a stovepipe hat. Every day was circus day when this peddler came to town. No wonder they called him Jubilee Jim!

Jim bought his supplies from Jordan, Marsh & Co. in Boston; and old Eben Jordan took a shine to him. When the Civil War broke out, Jim wasn't too proud to fight; he was just too busy. He was down in Washington selling army blankets to the government. Jordan furnished the blankets. Jim attended to the bribery himself. He learned a lot in Washington that was useful to him later on.

"You can sell the government anything," he gloated.

I don't suppose it occurred to Jim Fisk that he was doing anything wrong. Cheating Uncle Sam was routine in those days with better men than Jim. Bearers of many a still hallowed name were detected—when it was too late—selling uniforms that would not wear and overcoats that would not warm and food that would not digest and ammunition that would not fire.

Not satisfied with trifling commissions on blankets, Jim persuaded his Boston friends to set him up in the business of running contraband cotton through the army lines to supply the mills of New England. Cotton was worth twelve cents a pound down South, two dollars a pound up North. Jim bought from $100,000 to $500,000 worth a day. He and his Boston backers did well. Then, when Jim saw that the war was about over, he cast about for a way to make money out of the peace. The scheme he evolved will give you an idea of why so many people wanted to kill him.

From the J. Clarence Davies Collection, Museum of the City of New York

A FASHION PLATE OF 1849

(*Below,* Broadway and the Astor House; *above,* a Ball in progress)

Courtesy of the Museum of the City of New York

WALL STREET, 2:30 P.M., OCTOBER 13, 1857

(Painting by James Cafferty, N.A., and Charles G. Rosenberg)

Jim chartered the fastest boat he could get, and had it waiting off Halifax. When Lee surrendered, he telegraphed the one word "Go." There were no cables in those days. The English wouldn't know the war was over until the mails got in. Jim's boat, off to a head start, beat the mail boat by five days, and his agents sold $5,000,000 of worthless Confederate bonds on the London 'change before the Britishers found out that the Confederacy was no longer in existence.

By this time Jim's footwork was getting a little too fast for the Boston crowd; so he moved to New York, where the Wall Street wrecking crew recognized him at once as one of their own. "He's smart, that Jim Fisk," they said. One of those who spoke thus of the young man—Jim was still in his twenties—was Uncle Daniel Drew, who promptly became Jim Fisk's mentor in the roughest game in the history of finance.

32

OF THE FOUR HORSEMEN OF MANHATTAN TOE, VANDERBILT WAS the most successful, Drew the most despicable, Gould the most artful, and Fisk by far the most colorful.

Outstanding, that was the adjective for Jim. His stomach stood out; so did his waxed mustachios, his bonny mistress, his headlight diamond, and his crimes. There were those who were amused by his gaucheries and, because he was fat, thought he was a good fellow. They do say a good many whom he had swindled cried when he died. On the whole, though, his was the kind of conspicuousness that was just asking for a shower of lead.

Although he dodged the war, he dearly loved to wear a uniform. With the proceeds of some of his first stock-market killings he started the Narragansett Steamship Company or Fall River Line and appointed himself admiral.

"If Vanderbilt's a commodore, I guess I ought to rank as an admiral," he said.

Every sailing day, about half an hour before casting off, Admiral Fisk would appear on Pier 30 in the full uniform of his rank, take up his position by the gangplank where everybody could see him, wave his fat, ring-littered hands, and issue orders to all and sundry. He didn't know anything about a boat. But he had all the epaulets and gold braid, and he stayed on the bridge of the steamer until it had rounded the tip of Manhattan Island, where a tug was waiting to take him ashore.

People laughed at this splendiferous braggadocio; some even admired it; but more resented it, especially after one of Jim's spectacular corners in Wall Street had sent hundreds of people into bankruptcy. It's a wonder somebody didn't throw him into the North River.

Josie Mansfield, Jim's mistress, was the conspicuous type, too: dazzling white skin, startling black hair, huge gray eyes, and satisfactorily buxom. Jim had met her at one of those discreet establishments where ladies of sorts come when sent for, and had installed her in a luxurious home in West Twenty-fourth Street.

Josie had a navy-blue uniform, too, with brass buttons and epaulets like Jim's, and frequently helped to make the traveling salesman's departure for Fall River notable. But Josie's appearance on the pier or in any other public place didn't exactly contribute to the appeasement of a public that already thirsted for Jim Fisk's blood.

In his later years Jim became a colonel as well as an admiral by virtue of coming to the aid of the Ninth Regiment with much needed financial reinforcements. For no reason at all except his own aggrandizement he would call out his men of a fine summer evening and march at their head down Fifth Avenue, with flags flying and bands playing. One night he invited the whole regiment to the Grand Opera House to witness a rather naughty show he was backing, *The Twelve Temptations.*

"The guardsmen marched in, five hundred strong," stated one account, "with Jim dressed in a gorgeous uniform at their head, and the band playing its most patriotic airs. The audience applauded; free champagne was poured at Jim's expense; it was a proud occasion."

Time came, though, when the governor called out the militia to put down some Orangemen riots; and Jim's ardor for things military visibly cooled. The fighting Irish chased the fat colonel with clubs and cries of "Kill the bastard!" and sent him scuttling in his gold braid down side streets and through cellars and areaways. He didn't stop running until he reached the river, where he jumped on one of his tugs, and sailed down to Sandy Hook until the battle was over.

"I guess I must have climbed over a dozen back-yard fences," he said.

There were plenty of people in that mob that chased Jim whose minds weren't on Irish politics at the time, but on their own pocketbooks and bank accounts, which had been thoroughly vacuumed by Fisk's ruthless market raids and corporate steals. He was luckier to be allowed to return from Sandy Hook than Napoleon was from Elba.

When Jim wasn't exhibiting himself in uniform, he spent his leisure moments driving his coach and six-in-hand, one white horse and one black horse in each pair, through Central Park to Harlem Lane, where he bet and lost thousands of dollars on trotting races with Willie Vanderbilt, Frank Work, Boss Tweed, and other bloods.

Jim's coach was bright blue with red wheels; the upholstery was cloth of gold; the harnesses were gold plate; his whip was richly jeweled. If the weather was cold, he wore a mountainous coat of genuine sealskin. Although he always drove himself, he had two black coachmen in white livery up front and two white footmen in black livery in the rear.

On most of these occasions buxom Josie in gaudy frills would sit proudly beside her big blond buccaneer on the driver's seat, and afterward dare the scowls of respectable matrons on the piazza of Harry Bertholp's Hotel. Sometimes, though, to add a fillip to his exhibitionism, Jim would pick a couple of beauties from the French *opéra bouffe*. He couldn't understand a word they said, but, since they were both French and actresses, he thought they added greatly to his reputation as a man of parts.

Since Jim was known to have a wife somewhere up Boston way, these public flauntings brought down on his well-greased head the anger of moralists, both professional and amateur. Henry Ward Beecher, although afterward he himself was accused of carrying on "something scandalous" with Libby Tilton, thundered from his pulpit against Jim as "abominable in his lusts." All of which didn't bother Jim at all. What should have bothered him, though, was that the stockholders in his various enterprises showed a tendency to object to their money being thrown into "the lap of wantons."

It is a strange quirk of human nature that people who don't

mind being swindled hate to see the swindler having a good time. Jay Gould, who was an even greater crook than Jim and got away with about seventy millions of the public's money, never had a good time in his life and certainly never gave anybody one; but he got less than a tenth of the abuse Jim got, because he went straight home every night when he was too tired to squeeze pennies any more.

One of the first tricks Jim and Jay learned from Uncle Daniel was how to live in luxury if not in ease at the expense of "The Scarlet Woman of the Railroads." Drew had been the Erie's kept man for years. He now shared her allurements, at first willingly and later because he couldn't help himself, with his two younger associates. Whether this was wise or not is hard to tell. Uncle Daniel was getting old; perhaps the sharing of his meal ticket with Jim and Jay prolonged the period in which he might hope to share even partially in her bounty. Alone, he might have found himself no match for the wolflike Vanderbilt, who also had a lascivious eye for a pretty railroad.

In the beginning, Drew was Fagin and Jim and Jay were very willing and entirely uninhibited Artful Dodgers. But soon the little thieves grew to be big thieves; and when the life-and-death struggle came, they and not the old man were the principal undertakers. Jay worked silently but skillfully in the coffin department; Jim greeted the mourners and arranged flowers on the graves.

Fisk's first act as Prince of Erie—this was the title which he himself loved—was to buy Pike's Opera House, which he rechristened the Grand Opera House, at Twenty-third Street and Eighth Avenue. He bought it with Erie money, but had the deed recorded in the names of Gould and himself. Then he leased it back to the Erie for $70,000, although about the only thing that railroad did not need was an opera house.

Stockholders of the Erie seemed wholly unappreciative of this sybaritic welding of railroading and art. In fact, they didn't care for the Grand Opera House or any of its ways, especially when those ways were said to include undiscussable orgies with French hussies from the opera chorus. Frequently the broad-girthed Prince of Erie had to make his escape from the attacks of importunate investors to his own house on Twenty-third Street and thence to Josie's a block beyond. Once, all escape was cut off, and he got out

only by grace of "a wig of long gray hair, a full gray beard, a heavy coat, a muffler and large spectacles."

It did seem as if the pirate firm of Jim and Jay now went out of its way to lay up trouble for itself. Jim, especially, accumulated enemies faster than rabbits accumulate bunnies. The most powerful one was Commodore Vanderbilt, who was trying to get hold of the Erie, to unite her in more or less holy wedlock with his own New York Central.

One time the wily old Commodore thought he had cornered all the Erie stock there was on the market. Jim and Jay let him think so. Privately, however, they had voted themselves "for improvements" $10,000,000 in Erie bonds convertible into stock. When Fisk converted his half and dumped all the bright new certificates into Wall Street, the Commodore took an awful beating. He always claimed Jim robbed him of over six million dollars.

"That," he roared, "is what comes of kicking a skunk!"

It cost Jim and Jay $500,000—of Erie money, of course—to buy enough Albany legislators to legalize that little bond transaction, but not until there had ensued the most bizarre chapter in American finance.

The Commodore was not one to accept defeat gracefully, especially at the hands of two young sprigs like Jim and Jay. Beaten at his own game of stock-market manipulation, he took to the law, and, with the aid of Boss Tweed's complaisant Judge Barnard, soon had the Erie gang hamstrung with writs and injunctions aiming to prevent them from issuing more bonds convertible into stock and from voting the stock they had already acquired. But Jim and Jay knew some judges, too, especially one in upstate New York, who forthwith issued some writs of his own, which gave the Erie boys at least a plausible excuse for ignoring Judge Barnard's. So finally the Commodore asked, and Judge Barnard obediently gave, an order for the arrest of Drew, Gould, and Fisk for contempt of court and for the appointment of a Vanderbilt-minded receiver to take over the road.

There was the usual leak. Fisk, Gould, and the now senile Drew hurriedly extracted $6,000,000 in cash from the Erie safes, shoved it into a valise, grabbed first a hack and then a ferry, and fled to the Jersey side. Arrived in Jersey City, they were met by a small army of Erie porters who escorted them to a building not far from

the Erie depot known variously as Taylor's Hotel and Taylor's Castle. It now became Fort Taylor. While Uncle Daniel shut himself up in his room and prayed, and Partner Jay counted the money and ran the railroad, Admiral-Colonel Fisk, commanding a squad of fifty armed men and a fleet of lifeboats, mounted cannon on the ferry slips and piers, and, suitably attired, patrolled the hotel grounds and the water front, defying the State of New York in general and Commodore Vanderbilt in particular to make a frontal attack. Jim enjoyed himself thoroughly. After sending for Josie and establishing her safely behind the lines, he roared:

"As ambitious young men, we saw no chance for us in New York to expand, and so we came over here to grow up with the country. Yes, tell Mr. Greeley from us that we're sorry now that we didn't take his advice sooner about going west."

Partner Jay, however, was not so happy in exile. Many an opportunity to double that six million might come and go in Wall Street while Daniel prayed and Jim played. So he packed a small valise, containing half a million in greenbacks, and slipped quietly into Albany to convince the legislators that they should pass a law which, in effect, legitimized the bond transactions which threatened to send the trio to jail, and left the unholy trinity free to commit such future pillaging as they saw fit. For a time, Vanderbilt matched him dollar for dollar and vote for vote; the price of legislators reached an all-time high per head; but the Commodore, who hated parting with a penny almost as much as he loved making one, finally had to admit himself outclassed in corruption. The bill passed, and the Erie boys came back to Manhattan Toe.

The legalizing of this business of issuing railway bonds for improvements that were never made proved an increasingly profitable one for the two young buccaneers, who soon ran the Erie's bonded indebtedness up to around $64,000,000. Meanwhile, the company's rolling stock ran steadily down. Wrecks, with terrible loss of life, were distressingly frequent. The newspapers called them "Erie Massacres." The relatives of the dead didn't like them, either. Jim had to do a lot of back-fence climbing.

He had plenty of police protection, though, and political protection of all sorts, for Boss Tweed, observing that cash flowed more freely from Erie's coffers than from New York Central's,

deserted his former patron, the Commodore, and was seen more and more freely in the company of Jubilee Jim.

Then came Black Friday and the collapse of the corner in gold. This was the scandalous affair which involved members of President Grant's family and almost caught the hero of Appomattox in its coils. To do Jim justice, the gold corner wasn't his idea. It originated in the Mephistophelean brain of little Jay Gould. Jim was against it, not because he thought it was wrong, but because he thought it wouldn't work.

When it came to the showdown, though, Jim as usual was the front man. He it was who sat in his favorite broker's office with his coat off and his pink-striped shirt sleeves vying for attention with the glittering diamond on his shirt front and the heavy gold watch chain across his bright blue velvet waistcoat, giving orders and dropping hints which sent the price of gold to almost 170 and sent individuals and firms into hopeless bankruptcy.

Jim and Jay had all the gold there was—except of course, what the government had—and could get for it whatever they asked. Then, suddenly, the government began selling gold on its own account. The bottom dropped out of the market. More fortunes were swept away. The conspirators themselves were lucky to get away with a few millions of the almost countless ones they would have realized if the corner had held. Their followers, with fewer resources and less skill, lost everything.

Jim and Jay fled from the angry Wall Street mob through a back door, and didn't stop fleeing until they had barricaded themselves behind the tessellated marbles and hired thugs of the Grand Opera House. For days angry mobs milled around the Twenty-third Street fortress. Men and women who had lost everything cried out for vengeance on Jubilee Jim. Jay Gould, who had started the whole thing, was forgotten. Jim was the victim they demanded for their funeral pyre.

"Where is the scoundrel?" they yelled. "He's a thief!"

When, at the subsequent Congressional investigation, it was shown that Jim had not only led friend and foe into the black hole of disaster, but had repudiated all of his own contracts on the flimsy pretense that he, the great Jim Fisk, had not been buying gold for himself but for a comparatively obscure broker,

who promptly failed and left everybody high and dry, the anger at the brazen brigand became nation-wide.

In January, 1870, James Fisk was probably the worst insurance risk in the United States. Two years later, January 6, 1872, he lay a lump of dying flesh on the marble staircase of the Grand Central Hotel at Broadway and Fourth Street—murdered, not by one of the millions he had defrauded, but by one of the few he had ever befriended, Edward S. Stokes, who had rewarded his benefactor by crawling, on Jim's afternoons out, into Josie Mansfield's bed.

The death of the Prince of Erie left the king thereof, Jay Gould, as naked as a broker without a customers' man. The public, which had cheered Fisk as often as it cursed him, now had nothing but curses for his silent, gloomy, somewhat effeminate partner. And the enemy, the so-called better element in the Street, taking full advantage of this solidifying of feeling against the Erie gang, stirred up complaining stockholders until they descended in armed force on the late Jim's beloved opera house and scared little Jay into promising to return $12,000,000 which they said he and Fisk had stolen, and, more important, into giving up control of the company's stock.

But the new owners of the railroad, for all their often expressed horror at the Gould ethics, were practical men. When they found there was nothing left in poor old Erie for them to grab, they were not above listening to their old enemy's suggestion as to how they could get more out of the situation for themselves—and, of course, for himself!—than by trying to hold him to his promise of restitution. In short, they joined the artful Gould in one last gigantic pool, which sent the worthless Erie stock up from 30 to 70 and 75—at which point they all sold out, and bequeathed to their fellow stockholders and the long-suffering public a virtually bankrupt concern. As Jim Fisk had said on a previous similar occasion, "Nothing was lost save honor!"

However, the death of Fisk marked the end of an era.

Gould pocketed every dollar he could lay his hands on, and this time he really did go west and really did go into the railroad business. Beginning with an investment in the newly completed Union Pacific Railroad, Gould multiplied his holdings by shrewd competitive practices until he found himself in control of

a system of roads comprising more than half the mileage of the Southwest. Later he was to return to Manhattan Toe as a "solid" businessman, to extend his holdings to other companies, and to profit greatly by bear transactions before and during the panic of 1873. At one time he controlled the Western Union Telegraph Company and New York City's new elevated railways. But he didn't try any more gold corners or other spectacular coups of the old Jim-and-Jay type.

Drew was old and broken, almost broke. Commodore Vanderbilt was neither broken nor broke, but he was showing his age. It was said that he was attending spiritualistic séances and operating his roads according to the dictates of the spooks. He was also spending a good deal of his time with those sensational sisters, Virginia Woodhull and Tennessee Claflin, the first "female stockbrokers." Neither association seems to have impeded the growth of the so-called Vanderbilt "empire"—a word that was to be heard often on Manhattan Toe in the years between 1873 and 1929. Neither did his new friends on either side of the "deadline" tempt the old man to change his parsimonious scale of living. On his deathbed in 1877, when the doctor prescribed champagne, he asked:

"Won't sody water do instead?"

33

BY 1861, PROMISING REPLACEMENTS FOR VANDERBILT, DREW, Gould, and Fisk were rounding into shape: John Rockefeller in Cleveland; Andy Carnegie in Pittsburgh; Phil Armour in Chicago; Collis Huntington and Leland Stanford on the Pacific Coast. Jim Hill was already plowing up the Northwest, and a big slow-moving fellow named J. Pierpont Morgan had returned from London to New York to complete his financial education. All of these men, except Huntington and Stanford, were in their twenties. The future looked good, in a way, for dear old Manhattan Toe. The present, however, was superficially static.

The war years themselves had been strangely uneventful. There had been, of course, the riots; but these involved only a small segment of the population. There had been also the usual scramble of the politicians, headed by Mayor Wood himself, to mount the patriotic band wagon, once it began to roll; but their squirmings concerned chiefly themselves. Families gradually adjusted themselves to the three months' absences of some of their menfolk. Soldiers passing through the city became a commonplace. Business was as usual.

In the few residential streets that still remained on Manhattan Toe, milkmen wearing great yokes, from each side of which hung shiny kettles, still made their peculiar sounds, which had started as "Milk, ho!" and had degenerated through the years into various

whistles and moans which only they and their customers understood. Bakers, carrying their wares in huge round baskets perched high on one shoulder, shouted, "Tea rusk!" "Gingerbread!" and, of course, "Hot cross buns!" And chimney sweeps, usually smiling young Negro boys, made the streets ring with their cries of—

"Sweep, ho!
From the bottom to the top,
Without a ladder or a rope.
Sweep, ho!"

Barnum's American Museum, on Manhattan Toe, was still advertising "Miss Jane Campbell, the Celebrated Giant Girl, the largest Mountain of Human Flesh ever seen in the form of a woman." "P. T." had already fought his famous battle with St. Paul's vestrymen, who tried to haul down the flags which the enterprising showman had strung across Broadway from the roof of his museum to the branch of a tree in St. Paul's churchyard. Appealing to the patriotism of a Washington's birthday crowd, Barnum had succeeded in putting the churchmen ignominiously to rout; whereupon, the crowds that flocked into his place of amusement became so dense that—according to the oft-repeated story—he was forced to place over a rear exit the intriguing sign: "This way to the Egress." The ruse worked; people trampled over each other in their eagerness to view this new monster, and found themselves presently in the alley.

But Barnum's stay on Manhattan Toe was nearing an end. Few large hotels, no commercial establishments that kept open at night, almost no first-class dwelling houses, and few places of amusement remained between the Battery and the Fields. It is doubtful, however, if P.T., who loved his old stand at Broadway and Ann, would have joined the uptown movement as early as he did if it had not been for a fire which broke out in the museum during the noon hour of July 13, 1865, and destroyed the building. "And when it burned down," wrote the astute Henry Collins Brown, "it furnished a fitting end to the long list of sensations which it had already created. A dead whale lay in the streets for two days after the fire, and a marble statue of Queen Victoria perched blithely among the blackened ruins for a week."

In the first year of the war there had appeared on the Hudson

River the *Mary Powell,* most notable and most durable of river steamboats. She plied the river regularly for sixty-two years. The proud boast of her owners, when she was retired in 1923, was that "she was never beaten by another steamboat, never lost a passenger, maintained perfect schedules, and to the last remained one of the most graceful craft in the river." But the Hudson as an avenue of commercial traffic via the canal to and from the Great Lakes became steadily less important during the war years. In 1864 railroad tonnage in and out of New York for the first time exceeded canal tonnage. Thereafter canal tonnage decreased rapidly. DeWitt Clinton's Big Ditch had done its job. There were gradual changes, too, in traffic on the sea. Sailing packets were on their way out. Owners of the famous Black Ball packets surrendered to the Cunard and National steam lines.

The *Great Eastern,* the largest ship afloat, completed the largest job ever tackled by a ship: the laying of the Atlantic cable. This achievement, in 1866, crowned twelve years of determined industry on the part of Cyrus W. Field, made the former junk dealer one of the world's most honored men. The following year Charles T. Harvey, said to be inventor of the first elevated railway, made "a non-stop run from the Battery to Morris Street, a distance of one block, which was the full extent of the line." A proposal about this time for an elevated pneumatic railroad to be suspended from arches didn't get even a block.

Politics, as well as business, continued uninterruptedly on Manhattan Toe. "On election day," wrote Arthur Winthrop Earle, "the owners of the large refineries in the eighth ward . . . formed their employees in line, placed the ballot in their hands, marched them off to the polls and saw them deposit the ballots in the ballot-box." Wrote another prominent citizen: "It can be safely said that the selection of candidates for our city councils on the ground of their fitness . . . is a thing almost unknown." One tragedy occurring in this period, however, could not be blamed on the city fathers: the street-cleaning contractors' workers went on strike, and the city, with its streets untouched for two months, was described by the *Sun* as a "colossal stink bag."

The Gem Saloon, within easy tippling distance of the City Hall at Broadway and Worth, had some of the biggest mirrors and one of the longest bars in the city. Mayors Fernando Wood and

A. Oakey Hall were regular communicants; and Boss Tweed, Peter B. Sweeny, and Richard B. Connolly were also members of the congregation. Tweed was a loud-voiced vulgarian, but a lavish spender, generous in his dealings with his friends, and, on the whole, a very popular man. He combined the shrewdness of a Murphy, the cruelty of a Croker, and the joviality of a Tom Foley or a Tim Sullivan. He was the first Tammany leader to be called, by universal consent, "Boss." Oakey Hall was his front man.

Hall has been called the Jimmie Walker of his day. In a sense this is a true characterization. He had a ready wit, an eloquent tongue, "a way with him." He used the pun as Jimmie was to use the wisecrack. He was indubitably a snappy dresser. He was loyal to his friends. He was also a poet. "He sings a good song, composes poetry by the yard"—this from a local columnist of the period—"responds to a toast with remarkable eloquence and taste, mixes a lobster salad as well as Delmonico's head cook, smokes the best cigar in New York, respects old age, and admires youth, as poets and orators invariably do."

Although a Manhattan Toe lawyer with a large practice, Oakey was even more closely allied with the stage than Jimmie was to be. He was the author of several plays, a burletta called *Humpty Dumpty,* and an extravaganza, *Loyalina, Brigadier General Fortunio and His Seven Gifted Aides-de-Camp.* The last-named epic was produced at the Olympic Theatre during his stay in City Hall. He frequently appeared in his own plays.

Like Jimmie, Oakey was fun.

Also of interest to many Manhattan Toeites, although not strictly a Manhattan Toe event, was a theatrical entertainment which ran indefinitely, grossed a million dollars, and might, not inappropriately, be called the nineteenth century's *Life with Father: The Black Crook.*

Immigration had paused during the war, but country boys kept arriving from all sections of our own land to seek their fortunes in the great city. *New York by Sunlight and Gaslight* quoted one of them as saying: "I came up the Bay from Monmouth County, New Jersey, full of hope and confidence. The sail up the broad blue water gave new life to this feeling. I knew I was competent, and I was resolved to succeed. I landed at Pier Number One, near the Battery, and taking my valise started uptown. I turned into

Broadway at the Bowling Green, and as I did so, found myself in a steady stream of human beings. I got as far as Trinity Churchyard, and then I put my valise upon the pavement and leaning against the railing, watched the people as they passed me by. As I gazed at this mighty torrent I was dismayed. I asked myself, 'What chance have I here?' "

The Battery had lost some of its prestige as the home of romance. Prints of this period show ice wagons, delivery trucks, drays, pushcarts, and one Belt Line horsecar. The financial district, however, retained much of its character and all of its disrepute. In 1870 William Worthington Fowler wrote thus feelingly of the New York Stock Exchange: "That lofty façade on Broad Street builded as of snowy marble of Paros, 'of kingliest masonry,' sinks into a modest two-story brick rear on New Street, emblematical of the stately fortunes which enter that stately front, and issue diminished from that diminished rear."

We have seen many other instances in this narrative of a country-wide distrust of New York City. Wall Street, from the beginning, shared in this lack of confidence; but, up to the Civil War, the American people's distrust of Wall Street was chiefly, almost exclusively, merely part of the continuing suspicious feeling toward the city as a whole. However, the events which had occurred in the Street beginning in 1861 had not only added to the qualms and misgivings with which the rest of the country regarded the big town, but had solidified and accentuated the feeling against Wall Street itself and everything it stood for.

There were other more tangible factors which hastened the 1873 crash. Oil was a word which was figuring more and more frequently in market reports. Great combinations were forming in the Midwest and Southwest. Names soon to be famous were appearing on the financial pages for the first time. Violent disturbances, ranging from cries of "Stop thief!" to threats to burn the refineries and lynch the refiners, were spreading throughout the oil country. The presence of this new giant among industries was bewildering, perhaps menacing. Eastern tenderfeet didn't understand it, didn't like it.

The scandals which had accompanied the building of the first transcontinental railway were other influential factors in undermining confidence. In our schoolbooks we have read of the thrill-

ing ceremonies attending the driving of the golden spike at Ogden, Utah, to mark the junction of the Central Pacific and the Union Pacific, of the gallant company of financiers and public men, "patriots all," who journeyed from far and near to celebrate this achievement. What most of the schoolbooks didn't tell was that many of these same "patriots," both financial and official, had been driving spikes and throwing monkey wrenches into this undertaking from its inception for the benefit of their own private bank accounts.

The Crédit Mobilier of America was the hybrid name of the construction company that obtained the contract to finish the road, and the Crédit Mobilier scandals, in which millions of dollars of government grants were diverted from the treasury of the railroad into the treasury of the construction company, and thence into the personal treasuries of the railroad officials and promoters who controlled both organizations, marked one of the lowest points of politico-financial corruption. When the storm broke, the chief beneficiaries of the grab, the promoters, tried to save themselves by parting with some of the swag to hungry congressmen. Great names were discovered on the lists of the bribed. The deluded public didn't know whom to trust.

As it happened, Manhattan Toe did not play a major role in this mammoth steal. The financiers most prominently involved hailed from Boston, and the officials most richly bribed came from all over the country. But Wall Street had already become a generic term for what was later called big business, especially the type of big business which carried with it implications of a darkly populated woodpile. So when the crash did come—precipitated not by a New Yorker, but inadvertently by a Philadelphian—the general public was ready to believe that the nation's whole financial structure with its foundations deep in the soil of Manhattan Toe was about to sink forever into the waters of Henry Hudson's northwest passage.

Jay Cooke, Philadelphia banker, had been to the Civil War what his fellow townsman, Robert Morris, had been to the Revolution, one of its angels. He was a man of high reputation, a cut above and a cut removed from most of the men whose stock-market shenanigans we have been observing. His war work added to his repute. Immediately after Bull Run he not only contributed

New York Public Library

WALL STREET, FROM BROAD, IN THE 'SIXTIES

Courtesy of the New-York Historical Society

PRINTING HOUSE SQUARE IN 1865

generously himself, but came to New York with Secretary Chase and persuaded New York bankers to lend the government what was then considered "the vast sum of $50,000,000" which he and they believed would be "sufficient to end the war." It was the first of many such efforts, and when the war ended he was quite the most respected financier in America.

His principal asset, apart from his reputation, was his political influence, to maintain which he indubitably was forced to use the weapons of the period. He "owned" congressmen and newspaper editors. He contributed heavily to the political campaigns of those who could be depended on to do his will. But even Jay Cooke's influence had not been enough to stay the public demand for investigation of the Crédit Mobilier scandals. He wasn't directly involved himself; he was engaged in financing another proposed transcontinental line, the Northern Pacific; but the whole way of life of which he was a part was at stake; if the Union Pacific went to the wall, Northern Pacific was sure to follow.

As a matter of fact, the scandals did make further financing of the Northern Pacific a very precarious enterprise. Cooke was hard pressed. To add to his burdens, his long-time Philadelphia rival, Drexel, of the newly formed firm of Drexel, Morgan & Co., began attacking Cooke's railroad project as a "South Sea Bubble." Conditions became steadily worse, especially in New York, where Jay Gould, returned from the Western wars, and the other stock-market bears were hammering the entire stock-market list. Banks were calling loans. On the morning of September 18, 1873, the New York branch of Jay Cooke & Co. closed its doors. The panic was on.

The details of that epochal disaster are not important to this story, but the effects of it are. If we can imagine what would have happened if, one morning in the recent depression, J. P. Morgan & Co. had failed to open for business, we have a fair picture of what happened to the stock market on Manhattan Toe in 1873. It wouldn't have been the losses and hardships imposed on Morgan's own customers that were the important things; it would have been the notice given to the world that the nation's financial structure, which had long been tottering, had at last fallen to the ground. To the man in the American street the shock was even more severe in 1873 than it would have been in, say, 1933. By

the latter date, the average American had become used to panics; in his own lifetime or in his parents' there had been the disasters of 1893, 1907, and 1929; he had seen the phoenix rise from what looked like the grave; but the panic of 1873 was the first one the great body of American citizens had ever experienced. The man in the street didn't know whether the phoenix would ever rise; he didn't even know there was a phoenix.

One immediate result of the national doldrums as they affected New York City was the final breaking up of the Tweed ring. The detailed story of this band of political desperadoes has been excluded, perhaps arbitrarily, from this narrative because their activities, although pivoted theoretically on the City Hall in the Fields, were exclusively directed and mainly conducted in Tammany headquarters north of the geographical limits of this story of Manhattan Toe. Briefly, however, we have glimpsed them when they fell within the scope of their allies, the financial desperadoes of the Jay-and-Jim era.

Boss Tweed, an intimate of Fisk and a director of the Erie, suffered considerable loss of prestige in the collapse of the railroad, and also some loss of money. It would not be true, however, to say that his fall was due wholly or even chiefly to Jim Fisk's death. Bill Tweed was not dependent on Fisk or on Erie for a living. An absolute boss of Tammany Hall and the city administration, he controlled the letting of all municipal contracts: in the erection of one building, $7,500 was charged up to thermometers, $40,000 to brooms, $500,000 to plastering, and over $1,250,000 to repairs to that same plastering before the structure was ready for occupancy. The city's debt was being doubled every two years.

There had been protests, of course, mounting in volume with the passing years. The courageous fight of George Jones and Louis J. Jennings of the *Times*—Jones was said to have refused a bribe of $5,000,000 to call off his bright young reporter-sleuths—was making headway with the more thoughtful citizens. Thomas Nast's cartoons in *Harper's Weekly* helped, too. The defeat of many Tammany candidates in 1871 and the subsequent abortive attempts to imprison Tweed himself on a twelve-year sentence on a felony charge had shown the stirrings of an aroused public conscience. But these reverses might have been only temporary. The thing that finally beat Tweed and sent him to die in prison was

the fact that the people of New York, like most of the people throughout the country, were broke.

To a generation that recalls the political repercussions in New York which followed the panic of 1929, the parallel is significantly close. Bill Tweed enjoyed great personal popularity: after all, wasn't he kind to the poor? Jimmie Walker enjoyed great personal popularity: he was ornamental; he appealed to our senses; he was fun. So long as the town had money, it could afford a Jimmie Walker, a Boss Tweed. But in 1932, when the town was broke, it decided it couldn't afford Walker. In 1874, it decided it couldn't afford Tweed.

And they say that history never repeats itself!

34

ABOUT THE ONLY GOOD THING THAT HAPPENED ON MANHATTAN Toe in 1873 was the birth of Al Smith. But in 1874, beginning with the breaking up of the Tweed ring, the old Toe perked up. Ninety- and one-hundred-foot buildings replaced forty- and fifty-footers. Architects were reported as amazed at "the giant structures rising all over the city to take the place of buildings which, less than twenty years ago, were considered ornaments of New York."

But, in 1875, Manhattan Toe suffered the ultimate in desecration, the building of the hideous "new" post office on the lower triangular tip of the historic Fields, a monstrosity which, for nearly three-quarters of a century, blocked what should have been one of the town's loveliest vistas: the City Hall from lower Broadway. The individual chiefly responsible for this vandalism, happily for him, has never been identified; if his name were known, it would "live in infamy."

Streets on the Toe, even those paved with cobblestones, packed mud after spring rains to a depth of several inches. Traffic delays of more than a half hour were still not uncommon in lower Broadway. Bus drivers were accused of swearing at patrons. What the patrons said to the drivers is quite unprintable. But when winter came, the situation changed completely. Broadway from the Battery to the Fields became a snow-carpeted thoroughfare filled with little one-horse sleighs driven by men in fur coats and

caps, and big, high sleighs with two and even four horses carrying gay parties of men and women, the former in cape overcoats and high hats and the latter in fur wraps and perky little hats set high on false hairdos. Sleigh bells and laughter—that was lower Broadway in the seventies!

Otherwise, life on Manhattan Island was pretty much as usual. A certain Methodist Bishop Simpson stated at a public meeting that there were as many prostitutes in New York as there were Methodists. So far as is known, no eyebrows were raised at this naïve remark. The chief of police, however, insisted that the bishop was wrong, that there were only five thousand prostitutes to more than that number of Methodists. Whoever was right, the parson or the policeman, postwar New York was obviously due for a large-scale revival; and it got it.

In the wake of the hardest times the country had ever known, Moody and Sankey, gospel preacher and gospel singer, moved into town and cleaned up. Deprived of security on earth, New Yorkers sought to make sure of security in heaven—a natural enough reaction, but one which has been conspicuously absent in more recent days of financial depression.

Two former Manhattan Toeites made the front page. In 1876 A. T. Stewart, New York's first "merchant prince," who had built up his business (now Wanamaker's) from a last-gasp cut-price sale to $25,000,000 a year, died and was buried in what the papers described as "one of the new fashioned preservers." "Without coming in contact with any part of the body," wrote one bright young man, "the ice is so arranged as to create and sustain a uniformly cold temperature, which is so free of moisture that the garments of the dead are perfectly dry." But the preserver didn't preserve the body of A. T. Stewart: when the vault was opened two years later, the corpse was mysteriously gone. And in 1880 our old friend Phineas Taylor Barnum incurred the displeasure of the British public by paying $10,000 to the Royal Zoological Gardens for the world's largest elephant.

"Take Gladstone and leave us Jumbo!" thundered the London press.

At a "feast of thanksgiving" to celebrate Cyrus W. Field's partial resuscitation of New York's elevated railways, the guests sang, "Wait Till the Clouds Roll By, Jennie." And an optimistic

orator said: "Hanging by the strap, like the horrors of the Black Hole of Calcutta, shall now pass into history!"

The year 1877 saw what its founders maintained was the first New York telephone company, Hilborne L. Roosevelt, president. The first subscriber was J. H. Haight at 81 John Street, who enjoyed exclusive service over a five-mile line across half-finished Brooklyn Bridge to his steel mill in south Brooklyn. The following year, the company's first telephone directory contained 184 names; but by 1879 there were only seventeen residential telephones in Manhattan, five in Brooklyn; and the first pay station did not appear until 1885.

Meanwhile, newspaper life continued with undiminished ferocity on Manhattan Toe. Dana of the *Sun* called Pulitzer of the *World* "Judas Pulitzer," and Pulitzer called Dana "Charles Ananias Dana." The milder-mannered *Times* said editorially that a certain Theodore Roosevelt had "a most refreshing habit of calling men and things by their right names." It also said that "in these days of judicial, ecclesiastical and journalistic subserviency to the robber barons of the Street, he should go far." And in the same year, 1882, still another Roosevelt, Franklin Delano, was born. (One reason why T.R. made the editorial page in 1882 and F.D.R. only the birth notices was that the former was born when his father was twenty-seven and the latter when his father was fifty-four.)

An 1882 event of much more immediate interest to Manhattan Toe was the turning on of the new "flooid." In 1879, the town wits had been much amused by word from Menlo Park, New Jersey, that a young man named Thomas A. Edison had invented an incandescent lamp. The reporter who recorded the event for James Gordon Bennett's *Herald* nearly lost his job, and Al Orr, the city editor who printed it, was jarred from his usual calm the following morning by a sudden and tumultuous visit from Thomas B. Connery, the paper's distinguished managing editor.

"How did this stuff get into the paper, Mr. Orr?" he demanded. "Lights strung on wires, indeed! You've made a laughingstock of the *Herald*. Oh, what will Mr. Bennett say!"

A scant two years later, at three o'clock in the afternoon of September 4, 1882, the first Edison central station at 257 Pearl Street went officially into action. It supplied light to the Polhemus

Building, the Barnes Building, Washburn and Moen, the Drexel Building (headquarters of Drexel, Morgan & Co.), most of the principal stores in Fulton Street from Nassau Street to the river, and—despite whatever Mr. Bennett may have said in 1879—to the editorial offices of the *Herald.*

The term "flooid" as applied to electricity arose from a popular story of the day which concerned a chat between two Irishmen engaged in laying the conduits for telegraph wires under the city streets. Mr. Rafferty, who had been in this country only a year, wished to know from his more experienced neighbor Mulcahey why the wires weren't "naked in the trenches."

"Bekase the flooid wud lake out an' spill the messages," explained Mr. Mulcahey, who had acquired a vast store of electrical knowledge from his colaborers in the conduit, all of which he imparted freely to Mr. Rafferty.

Among the facts thus given, Mr. Rafferty gathered that the "flooid's" other name was "lectricity," and that it was originally discovered by the Western Union Telegraph Company in cats, from which useful animals it had been boiled out in great quantities and was kept in an immense number of jars in the corporation's building on Broadway, whence it was supplied to Philadelphia, Chicago, Weehawken, and other great cities as their necessities demanded.

Apparently more worldly-wise people than Mr. Rafferty and Mr. Mulcahey needed enlightenment on this subject. The Washington *Post,* which circulated extensively among United States senators and representatives, volunteered this explanation: "There is much talk of the 'electric fluid.' We must correct our obsolete phraseology. There is no 'electric fluid'; it is not a fluid or any form of water; it is one of the correlated forces, and simply a mode of motion—but lively; it must be admitted to be lively."

Many users of the new "flooid" were as bewildered by their electric meters as they were by the electricity itself. "I remember one man," said Mr. Edison, "who had a saloon on Nassau Street. He had his lights burning for two or three months. It was in June, and Manager Chinnock put in a bill for twenty dollars; July for twenty dollars; August about twenty-eight dollars; September about thirty-five dollars. Of course the nights were getting longer. October about forty dollars. November about forty-five

dollars. Then the man called Chinnock up. He said: 'I want to see you about this electric light bill.' Chinnock went up to see him. He asked: 'Are you the manager of this electric light plant?' Chinnock replied, 'I have the honor.' 'Well,' he stated, 'my bill has gone from twenty dollars to twenty-eight dollars, thirty-five dollars, forty-five dollars. I want you to understand, young fellow, that my limit is sixty dollars.' "

The customer who gave Mr. Edison most concern, however, was curiously enough his most famous backer, John Pierpont Morgan. The financier had been among the first to install the new system. It was in Mr. Morgan's office that Mr. Edison himself had witnessed the initial performance of his electric drama. Moreover, Mr. Morgan had expressed himself as well satisfied not only with the product but with the prospects of the new company. But Morgan the stockholder and Morgan the customer were two very different persons—as Mr. Edison soon found out when the bill for the first month's service was duly rendered.

Mr. Morgan just could not believe that his establishment had used the amount of current for which it had been charged, and, with his usual bluntness, said as much. He did more: he hung cards on each fixture in his banking house, and instructed his clerks to enter on the card each day the exact time at which the lamp was turned on and off. Sure enough, the computation at the end of the second month indicated a substantial overcharge. Mr. Edison suggested "giving the little beggar another chance." The thing happened again—and the meter *was* in disgrace.

At this point, Edison determined on a personal investigation. Carefully he examined each fixture and the wires connected therewith. Everything seemed to be quite in order. Then he began questioning the various employees until finally he reached the janitor—"really a very excellent chap"—who cleaned up the office at night. Mr. Morgan, it developed, had forgotten the janitor, who, not having been told to keep track of the current he consumed, had swept and scrubbed to his heart's content in a continuous glow of Edison's incandescence.

It would not be true to say that the coming of electricity to Manhattan Toe caused as much consternation or excitement as did the coming of gas. But the impact was considerable. One editor told of a gentleman who wrote in, signing himself "Philan-

From the J. Clarence Davies Collection, Museum of the City of New York

FAST TROTTERS ON HARLEM LANE, 1870

(Currier & Ives print showing, in the foreground, Commodore Vanderbilt driving a pair and Robert Bonner driving Dexter)

Courtesy of the Museum of the City of New York

BROAD STREET DURING THE PANIC, 1873

(Wood engraving from *Harper's Weekly*, October 11, 1873)

thropist," to inquire "if the electric light—in place of dimmer gas—may not prove a factor for reform. If the business streets were nightly made as light as Franklin Square, do you think men who love to be respectable would tumble into the street at a late hour to be taken home by the police? Isn't this modern light an antagonist to deeds of darkness and shame?" The editor, being a New Englander, was properly cautious. "We give it up," he replied. "When we do not know whether there is dynamite or soothing syrup back of an inquiry we make it a rule to let it alone!"

If we were to take one of our too infrequent walks around town in this year 1882, we might not find the answer to Philanthropist's question, but we would find that the world on which the glow of Edison's lamps first shone was still a far different world from the one in which New Yorkers live today. Manhattan Toe was a low-lying vista of three-, four-, and five-story houses, with the steeple of the now overwhelmed Trinity Church rising nobly on the horizon. Greenwich Village was still a region of almost bucolic loveliness. Coastwise sailing vessels still reared their graceful masts along the water front. The great arm of the Statue of Liberty, then in process of construction, was being exhibited to curious throngs in Madison Square. The first bridge to Brooklyn was not yet completed.

Horses were the chief factor in all kinds of transportation. Traffic tangles were, as we have seen, numerous in lower Manhattan; and the horses, excited by the congestion, often made matters worse by getting tangled up in their own harnesses. They were frequently the victims of overwork; often overloaded, whipped, and underfed. Stables and blacksmith shops crowded office and residential buildings. Telephone, telegraph, burglar-alarm, fire-alarm, and stock ticker wires and poles added to the confusion. Some sections of the streets were actually darkened by the network of wires.

The end of the line for most horsecars from Manhattan Toe was Thirty-ninth Street. The cars were warmed in winter by wood or coal stoves, and in the most severe weather were further protected from the cold by straw on the floors. Four steam-engine elevated lines were operated on Second, Third, Sixth, and Ninth Avenues. Long flat pans beneath the engines kept water and

ashes from falling through to the street. There were more sailboats than any other kind of craft on the rivers and in the bays. Immigration from southern Europe had begun. The East Side was a mass of hovels. Several families lived in one or two rooms; often seven or eight persons shared one cellar. The first automobile was not due in America for ten years. The first subway in New York City was not due for twenty-three years.

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THE FIRST IMPORTANT EVENT OF THE FIRST ELECTRIC-LIGHTED decade on Manhattan Toe was the opening of Brooklyn Bridge in 1883. It was a toll bridge which charged "1 cent for pedestrians, 5 cents for cows, and 10 to 30 cents for horse-drawn vehicles." But the famous structure did not assume its proper place in New York folklore until three years later, when a man named Steve Brodie jumped from it, so he said, and thus added to the English language the phrase "do a Brodie."

And that very same year, Theodore Roosevelt actually did one. He ran for mayor against Abram S. Hewitt and Henry George, and didn't make it. Neither did George. But the cause of freedom was not wholly lost. A million people went down the bay to see the unveiling of the Statue of Liberty.

In the early eighties a new type of Jewish immigrant, variously described as Russian, Austrian, and Polish, but for the most part strictly Polish, began entering the country at Castle Garden. Many remained in New York. At the end of the decade Castle Garden again changed its spots, this time from immigrants to fish, and became the Aquarium. Wags were reportedly standing in line at public telephone booths to call up Whitehall 4-1569 and ask to speak to Mr. Fish. The next year, having promised to abjure polygamy, 142 Mormons were permitted to land at the new immigration station on Ellis Island.

The transatlantic liners which lay at the docks on Manhattan

Toe now flew the flags of all nations—except the American. When the four passenger liners of the American Steamship Line were converted in 1884 into freighters and immigrant carriers, American shipping sank to an all-time low. Said the company's announcement: "For more than two decades they have had the melancholy distinction of being the only merchant steamships to show the Stars and Stripes regularly in the ports of Western Europe." At last they had succumbed to their subsidized foreign rivals, who still make New York harbor one of the busiest ports in the world.

Alexander Dana Noyes, later the most distinguished of financial analysts but then only a cub reporter, covered a meeting of G.A.R. Post 100 and was shocked to learn that its "chief concern in life" appeared to be "legislation or special bills affecting increased pensions for themselves." At this time the city's daily newspapers, all of them still published on Manhattan Toe, ranged from four to six pages. Sunday papers, which had been started and then discontinued in the late seventies "because of doubt as to whether the average man would wish to read a newspaper on Sunday," had resumed publication. They ran from eight to twenty pages, contained no pictures, no comics.

Ada Channing Walker, who was Chicago's gift to Comstockism, invaded Charles A. Dana's editorial retreat on Manhattan Toe, and tried without success to get him to start a campaign against Carmencita, the Spanish dancer who, although fully clothed from neck to ankle, had become a draw at Koster & Bial's by the simple device of wearing her corsets outside her dress. "I do not see why you cannot keep your lady reformers at home," Dana wrote an Illinois friend. "If you hear of any more nuisances starting for the *Sun,* tell them to try Godkin at the *Post.*" Edwin Lawrence Godkin, as militant a figure in Manhattan Toe journalism as Dana himself, had recently described the latter's editorial style as "the calculated malice of splenetic age."

To Old Mother Nature was awarded the medal for the most spectacular incident of this decade. There have been bigger winds and higher snows than the blizzard of 1888, but few more celebrated in song and story. "The wind howled, whistled, banged, roared and moaned as it rushed along," wrote the famous reporter Julian Ralph. "It fell upon the house sides in fearful gusts, it strained great plate glass windows, rocked the frame houses,

pressed against doors so that it was almost dangerous to open them. It was a visible, substantial wind, so freighted was it with snow. It came in whirls, it descended in layers, it shot along in great blocks, it rose and fell and corkscrewed and zigzagged and played merry havoc with everything it could swing or batter or bang or carry away. At half past ten o'clock, not a dozen stores on Fulton Street had opened for business. Men were making wild efforts to clean the walks, only to see each shovelful of snow blown back upon them and piled against the doors again."

As a matter of record the famous blizzard was only a sixty-mile gale, and according to slides belonging to the American Historical Society the actual snowfall distributed over three days was 20.9 inches, but according to the stories told by the Blizzard Men of 1888, a group of gaffers who still meet once a year to swap tall stories of their experiences, the twenty inches became twenty feet and more. "I walked up a bank," reminisced one old gentleman, "and sat on top of a lamppost." Every year the tall tales grow taller, and so do the snow drifts.

Almost as spectacular and far more disastrous for many people who worked on Manhattan Toe was the attempt to kill Russell Sage by exploding a bomb in the old Arcade Building opposite Trinity Churchyard at the corner of Rector Street and Broadway. The attempt failed so far as old Russell was concerned, and he was able to continue his own exploding of bombs in the money market as of yore; but it meant death to some two hundred innocent bystanders in the building's offices and corridors. The body of Sage's secretary shot through a second-story window like a projectile from a gun, and crashed in the debris of Rector Street.

What threatened to be an even more tragic fall had occurred in 1884, when the failure of Grant & Ward, the brokerage firm to which the General had been induced to lend his name, reduced the ex-President to poverty. But for Grant there was a happy ending. With more of the old spirit than he had shown since the end of the Civil War, the old gentleman turned in his extremity, as Walter Scott and Samuel Clemens did in theirs, to literature. His *Memoirs* were "must" reading for patriots.

The train of circumstances and events which led to the collapse of Grant & Ward and to the far greater financial disaster of the

panic of 1893 had begun in the years of depression and recovery which followed the cataclysm of 1873.

The big fellows sometimes get caught in the panics. Jay Cooke in 1873 was a prime example; the world has seen some since. Usually, however, the big fellows escape because their intelligence services are better organized; they know what is going to happen before it happens; they retire to prepared positions with their ammunition intact. It should surprise no one, therefore, that the dominant figures of the first few years after the panic of 1873 were prepanic figures, the two members of the Old Guard who had not surrendered: Cornelius Vanderbilt and Jay Gould, the builder and the destroyer.

The Commodore, old now and increasingly eccentric, was still able to find his way around in the Wall Street maze. For him the panic was made to order. His rivals in the railroad field were mostly hard-pressed for cash; he had the cash; and by a wise and shrewd use of it he picked up for next to nothing roads in the near-Middle West which brought him at last into Chicago under his own power and on his own rails. It also enabled him and his son, mild-mannered "Public be damned" Willie, to warm up the frozen securities of these defunct railroads, add water, and serve to a revived and again hungry buying public.

Gould's methods were quite different. Aside from a genuine ambition to own a transcontinental road and a seemingly out-of-character sentimental feeling for the Missouri Pacific, Jay didn't care what he bought, so long as he bought it low and sold it high. We have seen that his rail holdings stretched from the Union Pacific to the Manhattan Elevated, and his incidental speculations went as far afield as the Western Union, which he allegedly valued chiefly for the chance it gave him to hold back important news and rig the stock market for his own benefit.

The big Commodore bought and built; his methods of acquisition and exploitation were often as crude as Gould's; but he never lost sight of his goal; every move he made was planned to make the New York Central a bigger and better railroad. Little Gould bought and destroyed. Uncle Daniel had long ago said of him, "His touch is death." He boosted the stock, and sank the assets—in his own safe deposit vault. Then, when the crash came, he was the little man who wasn't there. His income during this brief post-

panic period of piracy has been estimated at $10,000,000 a year.

The comparative merits of the two methods, Vanderbilt's and Gould's, are best seen in what happened to their fortunes after they died.

The Commodore left son Willie, who was so doubtful an asset that his father hadn't taken him into his business until he was fifty years old, $94,000,000. No man had ever before owned so large a fortune. Yet, within a very few years, despite management which had none of the courage or brilliance of its founder, this unparalleled fortune more than doubled. The Commodore had planned it that way.

Gould, after a long life that veered back and forth between near-bankruptcy and $10,000,000-a-year opulence, died on one of the upswings and bequeathed a fortune reputedly in the neighborhood of $80,000,000. But it was a speculator's fortune, not an investor's. It was not sufficiently integrated to profit by ordinary business processes. Deprived of its founder's genius for manipulation, it dwindled and wasted away, until now the name of Gould means little or nothing on Manhattan Toe.

I have stressed this comparison because it seems to me that the men who were now coming to the Toe and were to dominate it for the next two or three decades achieved a curious combination of the methods of Vanderbilt and Gould.

No reader of the muckraking literature of the early years of this century or the debunking literature of these middle years needs to be told that the "empire builders" of the seventies and eighties and nineties were also destroyers. The scholarly and diligent Gustavus Myers sees them as little else. The more tolerant Matthew Josephson likewise emphasizes their lethal qualities. Thorstein Veblen held similar views. One observer, I. F. Ward, cited by Veblen and re-cited by Josephson, summed up for all of them:

"The method was that of the ambush and the snare. Its ruling spirit was cunning. Its object was to deceive, circumvent, ensnare and capture. Low animal cunning was succeeded by more refined kinds of cunning. The more important of these go by the names of business shrewdness, strategy and diplomacy, none of which differ from ordinary cunning in anything but the degree of adroitness by which the victim is outwitted."

In specific instances an even better case might be made out for just plain animal cunning without any of the fancy names or attributes. Carnegie, for example. Something far lower and meaner than business shrewdness or strategy or diplomacy led him to take advantage of his partner Kloman's financial difficulties to squeeze him out of the great business he had done so much to create; led him to refuse help to Thomas Scott, the man who started him on the road to wealth, when Scott, caught in the panic 1873, was unable to meet his obligations. Something very close to the animal made John D. Rockefeller strew *his* road to wealth with the business corpses of his competitors.

But Carnegie was a builder. He it was who made the rails over which the great transcontinental trains were to roll; and he sold them to the road-builders more cheaply than any other steel man was willing to sell them: $65 per ton. The fact that it cost him only $20 to $30 to make them, and that he grabbed this extortionate profit from the hands of ill-paid laborers and the brains of unrewarded associates, does not detract from the fact that he made the rails, and delivered them where and when they could help most to build the nation. Even Rockefeller was a builder, although characteristically he built underground with drills and shovels and pipes.

By the same token, Jim Hill and Henry Villard, Leland Stanford and Collis Huntington built the West. The fact that they wrecked many a happy home in the doing of it blurs but does not erase their achievement. Nelson Morris with his frozen meat and Gustavus Swift with his refrigerator car made ours the best-fed nation in the world. No amount of meat scandals can take that credit from them. And if we were to go right down the line and call the roll of the men who were about to become the rulers of Manhattan Toe, we should find that they were builders first, even if, in some cases, they were destroyers afterward. In any event, with one or two exceptions, they were doers, not just moneylenders and -changers.

Let's have a look at them.

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WE'LL START WITH RUSSELL SAGE AND WORK UP. Sage was a holdover from the period when the money-changer, not the money-maker, was king, and as such he was definitely atypical of the new and more constructive years which were now upon him. His only claim to having done anything constructive is the invention of that Machiavellian market device called "puts and calls." Inventor or not, old tight-lipped, tight-pocketed Russell was certainly a chief beneficiary of this device, since the misguided holders of both calls and puts were often caught in the ups and downs of the market, and had to have money at any price. This was good for Russell's business, which was moneylending.

He was one of the most thoroughly objectionable skinflints in the long history of money. Edward Bok told Clarence Barron that when he, Bok, was a youngster working for the Western Union, Sage, who was a director, "used to send me out at noon for 2 apples for 4 cents, and carefully take back the odd cent and deposit it in the center of his well-filled wallet, wound about with a leather strap. I shall never forget the day I spent 5 cents when the 2-cent apples were bad. Mr. Sage delivered me a lecture for ten minutes: first, that I must obey orders, which was right, and next that I should never waste money."

Russell was no builder. He simply ran a pawnshop in which a man not only hocked his watch but his soul. Nevertheless, the

old usurer was frequently useful to those who did build. Since he never spent the fifth penny, he always had it, and when the big boys needed a lot of pennies—and quick—which the biggest of them often did, Uncle Russell could be persuaded to loan them a few for a measly 12 or 14 per cent.

Another parasitic holdover who was useful to both builders and destroyers, whichever had the price and would part with it, was James R. Keene. Jim Keene was an Englishman who had migrated to California in the gold rush, speculated on the San Francisco bourse in mining stocks, accumulated about six million dollars, and moved east to become what is technically known as an "operator" in the New York stock market. Jesse Livermore, who killed himself not so many years ago, was an "operator." The business of these gentry is to rig the market so that they and their employers make a lot of money and their opponents, usually including the general public, lose a lot. A handsomer way of saying the same thing is that they take indigestible securities and make them seem digestible.

Keene didn't care whose financial bed he slept in. During the late seventies it was Jay Gould's, when that worthy was rooking the Union Pacific and flooding the Western Union with watered stock. And when Gould cast him off, as he did most of his playmates, everybody thought that the Silver Fox, as he was called, was through. But Jim had a trade, albeit a slightly disreputable one, and although Gould handed him a seven-million-dollar beating as a parting gift, he presently turned up leading a foray in behalf of a group including William C. Whitney, Cleveland's secretary of the Navy and father of Payne and Harry Payne Whitney; Nelson Morris of frozen meat fame; and Oliver H. Payne, Whitney's father-in-law and representative of the new Standard Oil crowd.

Then, just to make it unanimous, he handled the spectacular stock-market manipulations which clinched for J. Pierpont Morgan his control of Northern Pacific and rid him of a large portion of the more than 600,000 shares of undigested securities which he and his associates had received as commission for forming the Steel Trust. Slick Jim was, intermittently, enormously successful, but like most people who try to play both ends against the middle, he died a lonely man.

Of the colorful newcomers who landed on Manhattan Toe during the eighties and early nineties, John W. "Bet-a-million" Gates was the most highly technicolored. The fabulous doings of him and his cronies, usually performed uptown against the paneled background of the Waldorf bar or the padded elegance of Mr. Canfield's gambling emporium at "No. 5," were vastly entertaining, but not significant. Like the effete James Hazen Hyde who was to flash across the Wall Street screen during the oncoming insurance scandals, the boisterous, roistering Gates was in no way typical of the financial giants of his day. He was a figure on Manhattan Toe, not a factor.

Most members of the new order in Wall Street were pretty solemn fellows, who assumed a piety if they had it not. Many reasons have been suggested for their insistent churchliness, none of them especially complimentary to them or to the church. But to anyone who has ever been a small-town boy in a great city, the explanation would seem simple enough: they were lonely. These lads from the Middle and Far West were in their thirties or late twenties. They were strangers even to each other. They were sober, industrious chaps who had been brought up in church-going families. It was as natural for Rockefeller and Carnegie to go to church and prayer meeting as it was for John Gates to go to the Waldorf bar.

It is significant, too, that even Gates, clown and roustabout though he seemed to be, was, underneath his veneer of frivolity, a doer. He had acquired the nucleus of his fortune by manufacturing wire fencing in St. Louis and selling it to the farmers of the new agricultural West. Eventually, by a long series of consolidations and promotions, he expanded his little business into a company with $90,000,000 capitalization, the American Steel and Wire Company. With the money thus acquired, John W. Gates became in the late nineties and early 1900's merely a spectacular plunger in stocks and grains. But when he first came to Wall Street, he represented, quite as much as Andy Carnegie and John Rockefeller did, the arrival on Manhattan Toe of a new dominant factor in American business: management.

The careers and characters of Carnegie and Rockefeller have been written up and down so often that they require no detailed telling here. Their relation to the Wall Street scene is less clearly

defined. To this chronicler the best way to phrase it would seem to be that they were the antitheses of a man like John W. Gates: they were factors without being figures.

Carnegie had an office on Manhattan Toe, in which, once his steel mills began to roll, he spent a major portion of his time; but he remained a steel man to the end; he took no part in the hurly-burly of stock-market life. John D. was not especially interested, either, in puts or calls; from his little office in Pearl Street and later from his larger one at 26 Broadway, surrounded by Brother William, John Achbold, Oliver Payne, Charles Pratt, and the two Henrys, Flagler and Rogers, he manipulated millions; but neither he nor any of his principal partners ever appeared in a Wall Street broker's back room; always, Rockfeller's line was a pipe line.

These men represented, as Gates did, the growing influence of management and operation, as distinguished from moneylending and -changing, in the financial life of Manhattan Toe. Moreover—and this is a point which is seldom stressed—they represent one special department of management, the importance of which was only beginning to be recognized: salesmanship.

We think of Carnegie as a manufacturer, and of course he was, in the sense that the Secretary of War is a warrior. But his chief interest in manufacturing was to be able to read the reports of his subordinates on the daily and weekly production and ask why it wasn't larger. To be sure, he introduced the Bessemer process of making steel into America, and all credit to him for that, but who wouldn't have introduced it after the glittering success it had already made in England? He himself said that he "had no shadow of a claim to rank as an inventor, chemist, investigator or mechanician." But he was unusually blessed and presumably unusually gifted in his choice of associates: first, Partner Kloman, until he got in the way; then Partner Phipps, who continued to be useful; then Captain Bill Jones, until he died; then Henry Clay Frick, the king of coke. These were the manufacturers. Carnegie was the salesman.

To him rather than to his protégé, the flashy Charles M. Schwab, belongs the medal for introducing supersalesmanship on an international scale. Wherever at the moment he happened to have lit—Pittsburgh, New York, London, Paris, a castle in Scotland—he

was in closest touch with the statesman who was planning a new battleship or the promoter who was planning a new railroad, and with that sense of timing which is characteristic of the good actor and the good salesman, he would invariably arrive on the spot. Andrew Carnegie in person, to shade whatever price his competitors might be offering, and get the order for the armor or the rails. Schwab in later years, adopting the same technique, was but following in the master's footsteps.

Rockefeller, although less obviously a salesman was predominatingly a distributor. He started his business career as a commission merchant and retained until his retirement in 1911 the merchandising point of view. It is true that the Standard Oil Company was in the oil refining business and, by consolidation and elimination, obtained a monopoly of that industry. But John D. did not concern himself unduly with the management of this end of his business. His job was to get the oil from the place where it was refined to the place where it was burned, and get it there more cheaply than anybody else could.

The fact that he achieved his goal by such unsavory methods as crushing small independent oil refiners and distributors, and by securing from railroads secret rebates which brought his cost of distribution far below that of his would-be competitors, does not alter the fact that he was primarily in the business of merchandising oil, and only incidentally in the business of stock-market manipulation. Yet he and the steel salesman, Carnegie, were destined to be the chief beneficiaries of the two most lurid stock-market adventures of their time, or any time: the creation of the Standard Oil Trust and the flotation of U.S. Steel.

Jim Hill was quite a different kidney. It goes against the grain to place Carnegie and Rockefeller on the honor list of the nation's builders—even if they deserve it. But Hill presents no such problem. Whatever his incidental slippings from the paths of virtue, he was manifestly a builder, and he has left a monument, the great Northwest, to prove it.

In 1856, when eighteen-year-old James Jerome Hill crossed the Canadian border into Minnesota Territory and got himself a shipping clerk's job at an obscure steamboat landing on the upper Mississippi, the Northwest, except for a few settlements on the Pacific coast, was a wilderness. The little town where

young Hill made his home had but recently acquired a new and fancy name, St. Paul. Previously it had been known as Pig's Eye. Not until six years later did Minnesota's first railroad train negotiate the steep grade between St. Paul and St. Anthony, not yet absorbed in the village of Minneapolis.

Today the ten-mile stretch between the two cities is a network of tracks so numerous that no one but a railway signal man would try to count them. Minnesota Transfer, on the St. Paul side, is the busiest freight yard in the world. Twenty-nine railroads, nine of them trunk lines, haul their loads into this maze of shifting signals and sudden switches, back and fill in orderly confusion until they have shuffled and swapped their cars with other cars from other railroads, then whistle their way out again. Over a million cars are transferred every year in this one yard.

Few, if any, of the millions who now live and prosper in the great expanse of country between St. Paul and Puget Sound—a country which, economically, did not exist when Jim Hill entered the railroad business—would withhold from that lionlike figure, who was to become second only to J. Pierpont Morgan in the Wall Street of the nineties, chief credit for the working of this miracle.

Obtaining the backing of two famous Scottish-born Canadian financiers and railroad builders, Donald Smith and George Stephen (subsequently Lords Strathcona and Mount Stephen), he was able to construct his first road to the Canadian border, and westward into Montana on the way to the coast, without having to sue for aid from the moneylenders on Manhattan Toe. This fact made him, at forty-odd, a fabulous and almost legendary figure and—when it was discovered that he had done the job without government subsidies or private scandals—an extraordinarily impressive one.

Among those impressed was the rising young financier, J. Pierpont Morgan, who became henceforth Jim Hill's stanchest ally—of whom much more anon.

Hill's chief rival in the conquest of the Northwest had been another builder of sorts, Henry Villard, a German immigrant whose real name was Heinrich Hilgard. He had come to America in 1853, served successively as a reporter on German-American newspapers, agent for Jay Cooke in procuring German immigrants to settle in the Northwest, war correspondent for the New York

Tribune, and fiscal agent for German holders of Western railway bonds. In the last-named capacity he became interested in railroading as a field of financial operations. In 1879 he organized the Oregon Railway and Navigation Company, and two years later, by a series of consolidations, accompanied by a series of sensational stock flotations, acquired control of the Northern Pacific Railroad, which was to be the only important competitor of Hill's Great Northern system until the former's downfall in the panic of 1893.

Villard was a brilliant man, one of the first to recognize the value of publicity as an aid to the sale of securities. He also specialized in two devices later to become all too common on Manhattan Toe: borrowing on the assets of properties he hoped to buy and declaring dividends out of what seemed to be merely the expectation of earnings. He also had the optimism of a Commodore Vanderbilt as to the volume of watered securities that could be issued against a given mile of railroad track. Wrote his one-time associate, the youthful German Wall Street plunger Charles Woerishoffer: "Villard had probably no superior in that important department of railway management."

Villard rode high and fell far. The spell which he cast over his associates on Manhattan Toe was very like the one Ivar Kreuger was to cast a few decades later. When he asked for millions, they were promptly forthcoming: no one bothered to ask the purpose for which they were to be used. As a result, when his house of cards toppled over in 1883, he became, perhaps undeservedly, the most hated man in the annals of American finance. Forced into bankruptcy and into resigning from the headship of his various enterprises, he hung on with tenacity to the little that was left—some said it was too much for a bankrupt—and, in 1889, backed by German capital, he again gained control of the Northern Pacific, and remained as chairman of its board of directors to preside over its financial collapse in 1893. Like a meteor, Villard had risen in the Wall Street heavens, and like a meteor he fell.

With the exception of Russell Sage, who should have been in an old folks' home, and Bet-a-million Gates, who was a mere boy when he began to make his pile, all of these men were very nearly of an age. Carnegie and Villard were born in 1835, Morgan

in 1837, Hill and Keene in 1838, and Rockefeller in 1839. But there was a younger man standing on the threshold of Wall Street greatness, who in 1873 was a broker's clerk and in 1893 an efficient president of a then not too important Middle West railroad, Edward H. Harriman. He it was, in the nineties and early 1900's, with the backing of some of the Standard Oil crowd and the immensely wealthy Jewish banking firm of Kuhn, Loeb & Co., who threatened the railroad ascendancy of James J. Hill and very nearly stole the shirt off Pierpont Morgan's ample back.

But in 1893 the Harriman menace was only beginning to take form. Most of the men we have been discussing were busy in that year figuring how they could best capitalize on the "rich man's panic" which suddenly swept the land. There was no good reason for this panic, but plenty of bad ones: overexpansion, managerial excesses, treasury grabs. Without warning, great railroads and industrial organizations, which had been cutting melons the year before, began cutting salaries and wages, laying off employees by the thousands, reducing production to the minimum, or closing their doors altogether.

General Jacob Coxey and his army moved on Washington. General J. P. Morgan and *his* army stayed in New York and looked over the field. There were, as usual after a panic, rich pickings—but not for Coxey.

37

As if the panic of 1893 were not enough, there came to Manhattan Toe the following year the Lexow State Senate inquiry into police corruption in New York City, which—although the chairman was a native of Brooklyn—was just one of those investigations inspired by upstate citizens to reform New York. The visiting solons found the usual amount of corruption and expressed the usual disapproval. That was all. Indirectly, however, this invasion from the hinterland had an excellent result. Theodore Roosevelt, believed politically dead, was glad to accept an appointment in 1895 as head of the Police Commission. With the help of his friend Jacob A. Riis he cleaned up the lower East Side, and showed himself a man to be reckoned with in the life of the metropolis.

Reformers from even farther away than Albany still descended upon the city. Having attempted to get *Trilby* suppressed because of its alleged indecency and to get Manhattan Toe's William C. Whitney thrown out of Grover Cleveland's cabinet because he was a horse-racer—both attempts happily falling short of success—Mr. Dana's old Chicago friend, Ada Channing Walker, as a dying gesture, "drew up a document on marriage for her niece, advising her to marry only a man resembling 'our precious Savior, Jesus Christ, in manners and appearance.' Unable to do so, from lack of data, the girl mourned her aunt two months and," according

to Thomas Beer, "married a sugar broker, six feet three inches long."

The year 1896 was officially one of New York's epochal years. The Greater New York Bill, which united in one municipality what are now the five boroughs of Manhattan, Kings, Queens, Richmond, and the Bronx, was signed. But, important as the new confederation was to become in the life of the city as a whole and the spot it would henceforth occupy in the list of the ten largest cities in the world, it had little effect on life on Manhattan Toe, except that it must have been somewhat disconcerting to wake up one morning and find that, instead of being the tip end of New York as it had been since 1609, it was now very nearly the longitudinal center.

Of much more significance to Manhattan Toe was an event which occurred in this same year a thousand miles west of the Hudson River. A tall young man from Nebraska was called upon to "fill in" during a lull in the Democratic National Convention in Chicago. His subject was gold, and, like Mr. Coolidge's pastor who spoke on sin, he was "agin it." Both speech and man were to exert considerable influence over life on Manhattan Toe for the next two decades. Of the speech, T. P. O'Connor said: "This is the greatest illustration in the world's history of the devastating effects of oratory." Of the man, the *Nation* said: "Probably no man in civil life had succeeded in inspiring so much terror without taking life, as Bryan."

The old days when New Yorkers went down to the sea in ships were gone, but they went out on the sea in them in rapidly increasing numbers. The big liners were here, and they were growing bigger. In 1899 the White Star Line launched its second *Oceanic,* a transatlantic steamship larger even than the *Great Eastern.* The *Oceanic* was 17,274 gross tons. Bigger ships needed bigger channels. Contracts were let, the harbor improved. Europeans still owned the ships. The only Manhattan Toeites who seemed to be interested in transatlantic navigation in American bottoms were George Harpo and Frank Samuelson who, according to the *Almanac,* "left Battery Park and started rowing a boat. 54 days later they reached the Scilly Isles off the English coast, presumably out of breath."

The Appellate Division of the New York State Supreme Court

refused in 1896 to approve a project for a subway in New York City on the ground that "the probabilities indicate that after sinking $51,000,000 in it without being able to complete it, the enterprise would have to be abandoned." Eight years later, New Yorkers saw the opening of the first subway, starting on Manhattan Toe and extending northward, mile after mile, mostly through solid rock. In the next twenty-five years New York spent on similar rapid-transit lines not just the $51,000,000 which the Appellate Division had felt would be wasted in such an enterprise, but over $600,000,000.

For all its progress, though, New York was a simple place. When Mr. Edward R. Hewitt bought one of the new steam-driven Locomobiles in 1899, he was informed that he would have to have a locomotive engineer's license to drive it. The examiners quizzed him for two days before giving in. He also found that there was an old law that a man with a red flag must walk a hundred feet ahead of any steam-driven vehicle on a public road. Nice girls of this period wore their long hair rolled high over "Fluffy Ruffles" fillers which made them look taller and perpetually scared. What bad girls wore or didn't wear wasn't talked about—much. Males, whatever their morals, sported derby hats, toothpick shoes, stiff collars and cuffs, and heavy dark wool suits summer and winter.

Ten years before, in 1889, dutifully and fantastically, Manhattan Toe had celebrated the Centennial. President Benjamin Harrison—such resemblance as his squat features may have borne to George Washington's noble ones being neatly concealed by his flowing beard—came up from the White House, and was rowed, as Washington had been, from Elizabethtown to the Battery in a decorated barge. John Greenleaf Whittier wrote an ode. Chauncey Depew made a speech. But in 1899 it staged a much more elaborate party. Admiral Dewey came home from the wars. New York gave him one of its biggest and noisiest receptions. According to *Leslie's Weekly,* Battery Park looked like "a lake of men and women, without islands."

But the man who stole the show was Theodore Roosevelt, riding at the head of the procession, the man who most New Yorkers believed (and perhaps rightly) was responsible for winning the war in Cuba. When he published his book *The Rough Riders,*

some critics suggested that he himself shared that belief. Said Finley Peter Dunne's Mr. Dooley: "If I was him I'd call th' book 'Alone in Cubia' or 'Th' Biography iv a Hero be Wan who Knows.' 'Th' Darin' Exploits iv a Brave Man be an Actual Eye-Witness, th' Account iv the Desthrucion iv Spanish Power in th Ant Hills, as it fell fr'm th' lips iv Teddy Rosenfelt an' was took down be his own hand.' "

But Theodore Roosevelt was the type to ride the wave over the rocks of ridicule and the sands of criticism. On September 14 of the first year of the new century he became president of the United States—and Manhattan Toe had something else to worry about besides Bryan.

Looking back on the supposedly Gay Nineties, the impression of confusion is much stronger than that of gaiety. Burned-leather pillows had replaced antimacassars on front parlor sofas; but passe partouts still looked down from parlor walls. Frances Willard beamed on the flourishing organization known as the Women's Christian Temperance Union which she had founded; but the most influential union of all was still the League of American Wheelmen. A man named Ford had experimented successfully in Detroit with his horseless carriage, but the Wright boys in Dayton were still considered more than a little "touched." Bradley Martin had given a ball in New York and Eugene Debs had given a strike in Illinois without settling any of the major difficulties between capital and labor. Everybody knew Bob Fitzsimmons was heavyweight champion of the world, but nobody knew the answer to William Allen White's question: "What's the matter with Kansas?" Flickers appeared in nickelodeons; but the iron dog still stood guard on the front lawn. A period of flux—that's what the nineties had been, without focus and without direction.

If this confusion had a pattern, so far as New York City was concerned, it was to be found in a gradual setting of the stage for the extraordinary period upon which the city was now entering. The curtain was already rising on the greatest show on Manhattan earth. The scene-shifters had done their work: the musicians were in their seats; the prompters in their boxes. Only the actors were unprepared for the drama that was to ensue.

Many of the actors, as a matter of fact, had scarcely been heard from: "Woodrow Wilson, a professor at Princeton; Calvin

Coolidge, who was practicing law in a New England town; Herbert Hoover, an engineer in China; Charles Evans Hughes, a young lawyer in New York; Alfred E. Smith, a clerk in the office of the Commissioner of Jurors; and Franklin D. Roosevelt, a freshman at Harvard." But in Wall Street, as we have already observed, a formidable cast of character actors, many of them "heavies," were already awaiting their cues.

The first real skyscraper came to New York in 1902 but not to Manhattan Toe. It rose where Broadway meets Fifth Avenue on a triangular lot which gave it its name, the Flatiron Building. Its immediate effect was to raise skirts and eyebrows. Nevertheless, it set a style in architecture which was to transform the city, especially the Manhattan Toe part of it, into what has been variously described as an Arizona mesa, a pincushion, a mastodon herd, a petrified forest, a New World Mont Saint-Michel, and dividends in the sky. But no matter by what name they were called, the skyscrapers did more for real-estate values on Manhattan Toe than any other single factor, except, of course, latitude and longitude. (I never look at them without wondering if wily old John Jacob Astor, when he bought all that land, knew that someday there would be an elevator.)

The mammoth coal strike of this same year sent the price in New York City to $30 a ton. T.R. intervened and, with the cooperation of the strikers' leader, John Mitchell, settled the strike; but not before George F. "Divine Right" Baer, president of the Reading Railroad, spokesman for the operators, and representative of Manhattan Toe interests, had sounded off as follows:

"The rights and interests of the laboring man will be protected and cared for, not by labor agitators, but by the Christian men to whom God in His infinite wisdom has given control of the property interests of the country."

Prior to the strike, the interests of the laboring man in some parts of Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Illinois were protected by these Christian men to the extent of a reputed maximum wage of $450 a year.

As if in answer to this challenge, the muckrakers arrived to make life miserable for the men on Manhattan Toe. Edwin Markham's "The Man with the Hoe," written in the last years of the old century, had set the pitch for the serious thought of

the new. *McClure's Magazine* published Ida Tarbell's history of the Standard Oil Company and Lincoln Steffens' *Shame of the Cities*. Hearst's Editor Brisbane and Cartoonist Opper undertook to tell the common people where they stood.

The "smart" boys in Wall Street, whose sons were to make fortunes out of aviation stocks, had hardly recovered from their hilarity over Professor Langley's attempt to fly a heavier-than-air machine, when word came from Kitty Hawk that the brothers Wright had actually flown nearly a thousand feet. No one believed it. But Manhattan Toe was no stupider than others. The brothers sent their sister in Dayton a telegram telling of their success and adding the information that they would be home for Christmas. Greatly excited, she rushed to the telephone and read the wire to the editor of one of the local papers. She thought he would be thrilled about the flight. What he said was "Well, I'm glad to know the boys are going to get home for Christmas." It wasn't until five years later, in 1908, that the achievement was seriously noticed by the newspapers on New York's Park Row.

Meanwhile, competition in the immigration business was fierce. Steerage passenger rates from Europe dropped to $10. And a good many economists thought that the high cost of living was due to the spreading desire for luxuries on the part of those who could not afford them. Manicures were coming in: cost, 25¢, tip, 10¢. Sodas showed a tendency to go to 10¢. Lew Dockstader predicted that the theater-going public would never stand for a $2 top. Steak went to the unbelievable price of 20¢ a pound. People of moderate means were beginning to own automobiles.

The limerick situation was bad. Business on Manhattan Toe came almost to a full stop while tycoons penned new versions of the one about the bucket and Nantucket. More statistically inclined Wall Streeters were busy behind doors marked "Private" trying to find out how old was Ann. This was the problem: "Mary is twenty-four years old. She is twice as old as Ann was when she was as old as Ann is now. How old is Ann now? A says the answer is sixteen. B says it is twelve. Which is correct?"

In Greenwich Village—no longer a health resort for Manhattan Toe—lived a sentimental, easygoing, slow-developing young man, who was later to appear on Manhattan Toe as impresario, protean star, and glorified master of ceremonies of the world's greatest

civic vaudeville. In the early 1900's, however, his chief assets were "a poetic side" and a very determined mother. One day Mrs. Walker, for that was the mother's name, whipped the neat red cloth off the kitchen table, leaving its white, scrubbed pine top invitingly bare. On the table she placed a pad of paper. In her son Jimmie's hand she placed a pencil. In the kitchen chair she placed son Jimmie himself. Then she went out and locked the door. When she returned he had written:

Now in the summer of life, sweetheart,
You say you love but me,
Gladly I'll give my heart to you,
Throbbing with ecstasy.
But last night I saw while a-dreaming,
The future, old and gray.
And I wondered if you'll love me then, dear.
Just as you do today.

Chorus

Will you love me in December as you do in May?
Will you love me in the same old-fashioned way?
When my hair has turned to gray,
Will you kiss me then and say
That you love me in December as you did in May?

While these important matters were going on, a gentleman in his middle forties who was to play a more dignified role than James J. Walker in the life of his city, state, and country was laboring in the Manhattan Toe vineyard as counsel for the legislative committee investigating the financial didos of H. B. and James Hazen Hyde and their fellow insurance moguls. The young lawyer was described in the violently capitalistic press as "Charles the Baptist" and "The Baptist Pope." His real name was Charles Evans Hughes, and his next stop was Albany.

About this time occurred the famous "Girl in the Pie" dinner attended, according to an account in the Sunday *American,* by such notable New Yorkers as John Elliott Cowdin, Robert Reid, Cooper Hewitt, Augustus Saint-Gaudens, Charles Dana Gibson, Robert Bacon, Whitney Warren, Stanford White, and Edward Simmons. Many of these men were familiar figures in the offices on Manhattan Toe, others in the drawing rooms and ateliers

of the upper Manhattan reaches. According to Mr. Simmons, in his delightful *From Seven to Seventy,* the party was a very circumspect affair, climaxed by the singing of the nursery rhyme:

> Sing a song of sixpence,
> Pockets full of rye,
> Four and twenty blackbirds
> Baked into a pie,
> When the pie was opened...

"And with that some one leaned forward and skillfully broke the pie crust. Dozens of canary birds (blackbirds not being available) poured out and flew to every corner of the room, just as a charming young figure of a girl, draped from head to foot in black, with a stuffed blackbird on her head, rose out of the dish."

The *American's* version was quite different: "This affair, ingeniously planned to amuse a party of New York men about town, wrecked the life of an innocent sixteen-year-old girl."

One morning two years later many of the leading figures on Manhattan Toe, including some who were at the blackbird party, went mysteriously into the silences. Shipping people reported an unprecedented rush to book de luxe staterooms for the European run. Reason: the night before the morning in question, on the roof of beautiful old Madison Square Garden, an assassin had murdered their friend and associate, Stanford White, the country's best-known architect, designer of the noble arch which stands so majestically where Fifth Avenue merges into Washington Square, of the Century and Metropolitan Clubs, of Dr. Parkhurst's exquisite church, and of the Hall of Fame.

The assassin was Harry Thaw, mad son of a Pittsburgh millionaire family, husband of the beautiful chorus girl Evelyn Nesbit Thaw, whom, he said, Stanford White had ruined. The men of Manhattan Toe knew what would happen, and what did happen: that the story of "The Girl in the Pie" dinner and every other off-the-record entertainment in which they and White had taken part would be dragged into the headlines of what was then known as the yellow press. They saved themselves, some of them, by not coming forward to defend their friend's memory. But no one could save Stanford White, or his fame.

William Travers Jerome, who prosecuted Thaw, was to New

York City what Theodore Roosevelt was to the country: its hero. Square-jawed, square-shooting, equally fond of Epictetus and Scotch whisky, Jerome was a "good egg." His cousin, beautiful Jennie Jerome, married Lord Randolph Churchill, became the mother of 50-per-cent-American and 100-per-cent-Britisher Winston Churchill. Her son and her cousin had much in common. When William Travers' friends criticized him for endangering his political future by crusading against Tammany, the answer he gave might have come from Winston Churchill, M.P. for Epping, when he was apparently destroying *his* future by hurling thunderbolts against Stanley Baldwin and Neville Chamberlain for failing to recognize the Nazi threat.

"'It's the right thing to do," said Jerome, "and I'm going to do it. Damn the consequences!"

For many years after he left the post of district attorney, he pursued the Pittsburgh madman from his law office on Manhattan Toe.

The day Harry Thaw shot Stanford White, John D. Rockefeller's new French wig was held up at the pier because the customs duty had not been paid. That same year, 1907, the bottom dropped out of the New York stock market, and stayed out until Jupiter Pluvius Morgan stuck in a bung.

38

THE PANIC OF 1907 WAS A MINOR AFFAIR AS COMPARED WITH the holocaust which occurred a little more than two decades later. It seems to have sneaked up on all concerned, at a time when a good many people, especially clergymen, felt that the peekaboo shirtwaist was the only real peril the nation had to face.

To be sure, there had been rumblings which should have warned of approaching disaster. Lawson's flamboyant exposure of the System in his *Frenzied Finance,* coming as it did on top of the more restrained muckraking of Ida Tarbell and Lincoln Steffens, had widened the already widespread distrust of Wall Street and everything for which it stood. The insurance scandals, too, had been devastating. The cold, machine-like Hughes had spread on the records for the first time factual evidence of how insiders operated to enrich themselves not only at the expense of investors but of widows and orphans. The huge salaries, commissions, bonuses, expense accounts, and direct and indirect emoluments of the insurance overlords aroused a public anger which no previous exposé had generated. Hatred was added to distrust.

Theodore Roosevelt's outgivings from the White House had done nothing to ameliorate the situation from the standpoint of the men of Manhattan Toe. In fact, his very presence there evoked no comforting thought. But, at this stage, it was his flair for phrasemaking that bothered Wall Street most. The phrases were

not all his own, but his use of them gave them momentum: special privilege, vested interests, undigested securities (I believe Morgan himself first perpetrated that one), interlocking directors, captains of industry, and the dangers of plutocracy. These terms, so ominous to the delicate ears of Manhattan Toeites, threatened to drive out from the dinner-table conversation of the thoughtful such hitherto engrossing topics as kissing bugs, Fletcherism, Oslerism, brain fag, bloodless surgery, imperialism, shirt-sleeve diplomacy, cigarette coupons, and the simple life.

There were the makings here of a people's panic, but the panic of 1907 was not a people's panic. It was a bankers', and to a lesser degree a politicians', panic. When it arrived, the bankers tried to blame it on that man in the White House, even tried to name the child after him. But that man struck back and hard. As a matter of fact, there was blame on both sides. If Wall Street had heeded the warnings of wise old Jacob Schiff, head of the great banking house of Kuhn, Loeb & Co., or if Mr. Roosevelt and his predecessors in office had heeded the many signs that the country had long since outgrown its antiquated banking and currency laws, there never would have been any panic.

One good thing that came out of this rather technical crisis was the approval, in 1912, by both bankers and politicians of the "Aldrich Plan" for banking reform, out of which grew the Federal Reserve Act under which American banks now operate. The Aldrich who achieved almost singlehanded this long delayed triumph over chaos was Nelson W., thirty years a U.S. senator from Rhode Island, father of Winthrop W., president of Manhattan Toe's huge Chase National Bank, and of Abby G., wife of the present John D. Rockefeller.

Another good thing—at least, we of the postpanic (1907 vintage) generation have been taught that it was good—was the first appearance on a public stage of John Pierpont Morgan as "the savior of his country" and, incidentally, as the one-man boss of Manhattan Toe. While bankers blamed politicians, and politicians blamed bankers, and dissident groups in each camp blamed each other, and nobody did anything about it, and the country was drifting closer and closer to the kind of cataclysm which befell it in 1929, the great man acted in a great man's way. He simply called in all the naughty little boys and told them they had to

be good; and they were good. They heard their master's voice, and obeyed it. The panic was off.

In some circles this achievement is still referred to as "saving his country," in others as "saving his country for a price." Certainly he saved it from a lot of grief, and postponed for another twenty-odd years the inevitable holocaust. Morgan's right hand during this crisis—some say his guiding hand—was forty-year-old Henry Pomeroy Davison, then president of the Bankers Trust Company, two years later to become a Morgan partner, and during the First World War to be head of the American Red Cross. Davison did the legwork, and either Davison or Morgan did the brainwork, but it was Morgan's personality and prestige that did the job.

To understand how any one man could have acquired so much power in a field long bloodied by the warrings of financial Goliaths, it is necessary to understand the man himself and the part he had played in the epochal events which preceded and led up to the crisis of 1907. How was he different from Rockefeller and Carnegie and the rest? What gave him the victory? How did he gain it?

Well, for one thing, he had been to school. That is more than can be said, in any serious scholastic sense, about most of the glamorized figures who dominated Manhattan Toe during the seventies, eighties, and nineties. They may have been nature's noblemen, but they drank their nobility neat, undiluted by erudition. Morgan actually graduated from a Boston high school and spent considerable time at the University of Göttingen, in Germany.

The experience made him, in the Wall Street of his day, a man apart. It also slowed him up. His contemporaries stepped directly from adolescence to empire-building. Pierpont was obliged to detour through homework and required reading. Worse still, his father being an American banker who did his banking in London, his son must needs learn his trade in his father's office before returning to America in 1857.

Even then, he was not on his own the way the other boys were. His job was to represent his father's firm, George Peabody & Co. (later Morgan, Grenfell & Co.) in New York. His father, Junius, was still *the* Mr. Morgan, and continued to be for many more

years, during which he overshadowed his son quite as the son later overshadowed J. P. Morgan, Jr. Junius Morgan's son, people would say; well, well, what a big boy he has grown! Then they would turn to gaze in admiration or hate at the more exciting Fisk, Gould, or Vanderbilt.

Pierpont *was* a big boy. He didn't hulk like Vanderbilt, he towered. His head was large, his shoulders wide, his waistline only moderately bulging—especially in those first years in the Street—but he somehow managed to give the impression of being biggest-round at the bottom, like a lighthouse, and about as firmly fixed as a lighthouse is to its base. Solid and stolid were the words for Pierpont.

The manners of most of these financial barons were bad; Morgan's were execrable. Men ignorant of everything except their own subject are understandably silent, often wisely but nevertheless annoyingly so. But here was a young man born to wealth and social position, trained, educated, traveled, devoted to music and drama, knowledgeable in many fields of art, who couldn't or wouldn't sustain an adult conversation on any subject, even finance, for as much as five minutes. All his life Pierpont Morgan carried silence to the point of rudeness. As Jupiter Pluvius, the Storm King of Wall Street, his bad manners were tolerated, even forgiven. As a young man, his personality neither attracted nor impressed.

His first important venture on his own was also neither attractive nor impressive, at least not attractively impressive. The young man may not have known—he was only twenty-four when the Civil War began—that the man to whom he lent $17,000 through a third party to finance a carbine deal with the government was going to buy some of the government's own guns, discarded as useless, and sell them back to the government at a profit of nearly $100,000. Nevertheless, his insistence on his right to a major share of this profit and his boorish manner before the Congressional committee that investigated the transaction made an exceedingly poor impression.

This bad start he managed to live down by aligning himself with the "respectable" element in the street against Jay Gould and the Erie gang. In this battle Morgan did his fighting, by proxy of course, on the now forgotten Albany and Binghamton

front. Between these two upstate New York cities ran a little hundred-mile railroad, which suddenly became a vital transportation link between New England and the new hard-coal mines of Pennsylvania. Fisk and Gould wanted it; Morgan, having by 1869 some railroad plans of his own for his native New England, decided they couldn't have it. Fisk, taking the field in his usual dramatic fashion and backed as usual by a band of armed thugs to do the actual fighting, seized the Binghamton end of the line; Morgan, through the company's president, Ramsey, held the Albany end. Subsequent proceedings included bloody battles between armed bands and a head-on locomotive collision staged in what was to be, thirty-odd years later, the best movie style. Neither party won the physical battle but Morgan's won the legal ones, and the *New York Times* piously opined that "justice, though tardy, is on the right track at last."

For some reason this escapade was considered proof of the high courage and moral hardihood of Junius Morgan's big boy Pierpont. Perhaps this general acclaim was due to the fact that it had suited his purpose in this case to be on the side of the legitimate owners of the railroad; perhaps to the fact that feeling against the Erie gang was running so high that Jim Fisk's tummy had become an accepted punching bag for public punishment, and anyone who could knock the wind out of it even temporarily was a public benefactor.

From this point on Morgan flew high. At the age of thirty-four he teamed with Anthony Drexel, the powerful Philadelphia banker, as Drexel, Morgan & Co. As Drexel's partner he was involved in the fight on Jay Cooke which resulted in the latter's ruin and the panic of 1873. Cooke had been the government financier. Manhattan Toeites predicted accurately that Morgan would step into his vacant shoes. When the government's next great need came, after the 1893 crisis, it was to Morgan—fortified by the cash which his father's old firm was continually siphoning out of European strongboxes and sending to him for investment—that President Cleveland had to turn for the wherewithal to meet government pay rolls. But saving the country on this occasion reflected little credit on its savior. His terms were universally condemned as "harsh."

They were harsh times. The authors of *New York Panorama,*

surveying the scene, report a situation "of violent extremes, violent contrasts, of wealth and poverty, senseless luxury and unspeakable destitution. Contrasts that nowhere took on a more sharp-edged quality than in the nation's metropolis with slum and aristocratic mansion often within stone's throw of each other." These physical harshnesses reacted spiritually, ethically. Morgan was no exception. It is simply that we expect more of so exceptional a man.

Rockefeller, whose terms were seldom gentle ones in any transaction, had consolidated his gains in 1882 by a new legal device to become first famous and then infamous as a trust. Until then the more than forty Rockefeller companies had operated as an informal pool maintained by a complicated and not always effective exchange of stock. The trust made this arrangement permanent and binding and much more workable by having all the controlling stockholders deposit all of their stock in all of the companies with one group of trustees authorized to conduct the business of the companies as they saw fit, to dissolve such companies as outlived their usefulness, to form new ones, and, in general, to exercise absolute and final dictatorial control of the entire enterprise.

The trust was said to be the brain child of Standard Oil lawyer Samuel C. T. Dodd, a fact which emphasized the increasing influence of Wall Street lawyers in the conduct of American business. Naturally, neither Mr. Dodd nor Standard Oil could copyright such a device. The eighties and nineties saw an endless procession of trusts and mergers—the latter mostly accomplished under the wide-open corporation laws of neighboring New Jersey —all of which required the expert services of a group of men who came to be known and soundly anathematized as "corporation lawyers."

Morgan, quick to recognize the usefulness of new legal devices in his now well-formulated campaign to centralize control of as many important industries as possible at 23 Wall, provided himself with what was, and through judicious replacements has continued to be, the strongest and most resourceful legal staff in the world. One of the pioneers was Judge Elbert H. Gary, who threw together most of the worth-while steel plants that Carnegie did not control into a Morgan-financed Federal Steel Company,

and later became the first president of the Morgan-financed Steel Trust.

Trust followed trust with machine-gun rapidity during the eighties and nineties and early 1900's: the Sugar Trust, the Beef Trust, the Shipping Trust, the Coal Trust, etc., etc. Some of these, notably sugar and beef, were initiated and to some degree financed by leading industrial figures: the Havemeyers in sugar and the Armours, Morris', Cudahys, and Swifts in beef. Others, like tobacco, were promotions of individual financiers like William C. Whitney and Thomas Fortune Ryan. But Morgan had a hand in most of them, either as investor or broker; and in some of the biggest ones, like steel and coal, he was the whole thing.

So active was he in forming trusts, and so staggering were the sums involved, that by common consent he was awarded the title of Pierpontifex Maximus.

If, as in the case of the insurance companies as disclosed in the Hughes investigation of 1906-07, it was not possible or politic to effect a formal amalgamation, he found other ways of securing working control. At one time he dominated the three largest companies: Equitable, Mutual, New York, all of which were in a position to invest largely in securities that J. P. Morgan & Co. floated. He did the same thing to the banks: by purchases, alliances, and interlocking directorates, his became the last word in such great financial institutions as the Liberty, the Hanover, and the National Bank of Commerce; and through his faithful friend George F. Baker, even in the ultraconservative First National.

Pierpontifex Maximus was now ready for his big years. Although never a rich man in the sense that Rockefeller was rich, and apparently caring much less for wealth than for power, he was able, from this point on, to reach out and grab almost anything he wanted. As Mr. Dooley said: "Pierpont Morgan calls in wan iv his office boys, th' prisidint iv a naytional bank, an' says he, 'James,' he says, 'take some change out iv th' damper an' run out an' buy Europe f'r me,' he says. 'I intend to re-organize it an' put it on a payin' basis.' "

Courtesy of the New-York Historical Society

BROADWAY, ABOUT 1880, NORTH FROM CORTLANDT STREET

(Lithograph by J. J. Fogarty)

© *Brown Brothers, New York*

THE BLIZZARD OF 1888

(New Street, looking toward Wall)

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THE OFT-TOLD TALE OF HOW CHARLIE SCHWAB'S AFTER-DINNER eloquence persuaded J. P. Morgan, against his will, to buy Andy Carnegie's steel business hardly does justice to the situation. In the first place, no one ever persuaded Morgan to do anything he didn't want to do; and in the second place, he was up to his neck in the steel business already, and needed no word picture of the future of the industry to put the itch into his palms. His coyness with Schwab, and later in the long exchange of wiles between the canny Scot and the uncanny New Englander which resulted in the swallowing of the world's biggest financial mouthful, was part of a well-defined plan.

It is true, however, though seldom recognized, that the man's keenest personal interest lay not in any kind of manufacturing business but in railroading. In a way, it was the Eddie-Foy-wanting-to-play-Hamlet complex. He had never worked with his hands at anything. He couldn't split a rail or lay one. But to control those who were engaged in those constructive activities, which were in his day the chief factors in building the nation, was to exercise his muscles vicariously in a cause in which he thoroughly believed.

His early record, as we have seen, did not suggest a burning patriotism. But throughout his career he did have a sort of smoldering one. As early as 1865, when he was but twenty-eight years old, he said: "We are some day to show ourselves to be the richest country in the world." And no one can say that he did not

labor continuously throughout a long life to make this prediction, which for him embodied the highest possible ideal of success, come magnificently true. And the best instrument to that end, in his day, was the railroad.

If, as this observer believes, Pierpont Morgan's preoccupation with railroading was connected, somewhat tenuously, with an interest in the country it served, he sometimes strayed ingloriously: as, for instance, in New England. Possibly his understandable weakness for the land of his childhood may have blinded him to the rather obvious fact that geographically it was an unsuitable field for the grandiose type of railroad promotion which he affected. There are those who take a less kindly view, who say he didn't care. Anyhow, New England was too snug for railroads on the grand scale; it had got along splendidly for centuries with the stagecoach and the buggy; it was built to order, as the years have proved, for the trolley, the jitney, the truck, and the bus.

One good line there was, the New Haven. It didn't need Morgan, but it got him; and with him the weirdest collection of down-at-the-wheel railroads in the whole history of American railroading. Morgan's idea was always centralization, monopoly. He couldn't play any other way. So he bought every twisted rail and octagonal wheel in New England, regardless of price and regardless of earning power, and dumped the lot, like the load of junk that it was, on the New Haven's doorstep. Result: the people who live in New England rode on those twisted rails and octagonal wheels, arrived at their destinations late or not at all—and the once profitable New Haven remained broke for decades.

In "the wide-open spaces" both he and the country got a better break. This was especially true after he coupled himself to a real railroad man, Jim Hill.

Up to 1890, when he first met the "grim old lion" of the Northwest, Morgan had had a lot of trouble with the practical men of the railway systems he was about to swallow. They seemed to think that their roads belonged to them: from Morgan's standpoint, a view that could not be tolerated. These rough men, who had never been to Göttingen or even to Boston's English High, not only fought Morgan but each other. This was all wrong. Peace with profit was what Morgan wanted, and what he got; but the

hard way. When things got too bad, he would call the boys in from the whistle stops and belabor them with that personality which was later to "save the country" until they were glad to back down their tracks and look around madly for a turntable.

Hill was different, and Morgan knew it the moment he set eyes on him. Some said it took a pirate to recognize a pirate. I am not so sure of that. The young Pierpont obviously loathed Jay Gould, and he never missed a chance to aim a kick at Jim Fisk, fore or aft, wherever he seemed to be fattest. The older Morgan fought implacably against Harriman, whom he always regarded as a broker's clerk masquerading in a railroad man's denims. But he took to Hill, the railroad-builder, right away and backed him unfailingly in his conquest of the Northwest.

Jim Hill had only one eye, but he had the vision. And I like to think that the banker's boy saw in him the kind of nation-builder he would have liked to be. They made a neat pair, Jim with his background and Pierpont with his, but they had points in common. Both were incurably rude, incurably pious, and incurably monopolistic. It was the last-named trait which most affected life on Manhattan Toe.

Two other groups were similarly inspired, or afflicted: the men of Standard Oil, who met daily in secret conclave at 26 Broadway, down near the spot where Hudson and Gomez and Verrazano allegedly landed; and the so-called "Kuhn-Loeb crowd," which was a generic name for those more modern voyagers from across the seas, the Schiffs, the Warburgs, the Kahns, the Wolffs, the Guggenheims, the Lewisohns, and all the other German Jewish financial greats who had followed the Rothschilds' Mr. Belmont from Bremen to the Battery.

The oil business wasn't much fun any more for John D., because he had it right where he wanted it. He also had more money than any one man had ever had before—some said over a billion dollars—and he was not one to let a dime lie idle. His partners, the men who sat in on those daily conferences on the fifteenth floor of 26 Broadway, also had money that was crying out for the adventurous life. Influenced by the brilliant and venturesome Henry Rogers, against whom Tom Lawson hurled his sharpest javelins, the Standard Oil crowd branched out boldly into copper, iron, public utilities; looked enviously on Morgan's empire of rails.

The Kuhn-Loeb crowd were less venturesome. The Lewisohns and the Guggenheims, who were not properly members of the group, were primarily miners and smelters. The bankers, led by the conservative Jacob Schiff, head of Kuhn, Loeb & Co., were primarily just that: bankers. But they, too, were solidly and extensively interested in railroads, and bitterly opposed to Morgan's domination of that field.

One measure of Morgan's stature is the fact that each of these groups had infinitely more money than he. Yet, in encounter after encounter, he consistently bested first the Baptists and then the Jews. His chief danger lay in the remote possibility that some financial sorcerer might cast such a spell over both of these widely divergent clans that they would present a united front against the otherwise impregnable House of Morgan. The possibility was, as I have said, remote; and the arrogance which had grown on J. Pierpont through the years may have led him to think that it was impossible. But the impossible sometimes happens on Manhattan Toe—and young Ned Harriman was just the boy to prove it.

This minister's son had crossed from Long Island to Manhattan Toe at the age of fourteen and got himself a job as quotation boy in a broker's office. Amazingly soon, he had a broker's office of his own, purchased a Stock Exchange seat for $3,000, earned a reputation as a shrewd floor operator, executed a corner in Illinois Central Railroad stock, became the road's president, and, being a young man of infinite courage, decided to prevent Pierpont Morgan, as representative of Willie Vanderbilt's heirs, from extending the New York Central lines west of Chicago. Succeeded, too, by some pretty sharp legal practice. Morgan never forgave him; and, several years later, when Harriman, with Kuhn-Loeb backing, had gobbled up most of Jay Gould's Central and Southwestern railroad monopoly, J. Pierpont took the keenest pleasure in blocking the entry of Harriman's transcontinental lines into Chicago.

The years had not softened Morgan. He had become a recognized patron of the arts, an indefatigable collector of paintings and rare books, an enthusiastic yachtsman, a world traveler, and the country's most prominent Episcopal layman. Every Sunday he passed the plate; and often on weekdays, after the hard work was over, he would sit alone for hours in the darkened auditorium

of Dr. Rainsford's church singing hymns to the music of his personal organist. But the next morning, at 23 Wall, he would burn the hide off even the closest and most trusted of his associates if they crossed him or seemed to fail him.

The man's search for rapport with the Infinite is believed to have gone even beyond the boundaries of conventional religion. In his old age, like Commodore Vanderbilt in his, he apparently sought comfort and guidance from the occult. In her autobiography, *The Bowl of Heaven,* Evangeline Adams, the famous Carnegie Hall astrologer, records:

> I read his [Morgan's] horoscope many times, and furnished him during the last years of his life a regular service, explaining the changing conditions of the planets and their probable effect on politics, business, and the stock market ... he renewed this service from year to year.... The first time he came to my studio, his attitude was frankly one of curiosity tinged with suspicion. I had a heavy Chinese screen in one corner of my studio; and I remember how Mr. Morgan pulled his huge frame out of his chair, and looked curiously behind the screen before beginning the interview. But that attitude melted away at the first meeting. And, in his last years, he asked me from Egypt to join him and his party in the Orient where he had gone on his famous yacht, the *Corsair.* His idea was to spend several months in the scientific investigation of the occult in those parts of the world where its practice reaches back into prehistoric time.

Be that as it may, neither God in His Heaven nor the stars in theirs had changed Pierpont Morgan's spots. He had few friends, many enemies. He brooked no opposition, and he never forgave. Years later, when Taft was in the White House, and from Morgan's standpoint all was well with the world, his old trust-busting nemesis, Theodore Roosevelt, decided to go lion-hunting in Africa. Said Morgan: "I hope the first lion he meets does its duty."

In Harriman, however, he found an enemy quite as implacable as himself. He was a little man, mousy except for his shining eyes; the firmness of his lower face was camouflaged by a long droopy mustache. His inconspicuousness may have been responsible for the failure of Morgan's spies to note that, after the Chicago rebuff, he was to be found more and more often riding the elevators at 26 Broadway, adding to his already strong Jewish backing the

Baptist billions of Standard Oil. They seem also to have failed to notice that he had turned his predatory gaze north-by-west to that line which had succeeded the Erie as the stormy petrel of American railroading, the Northern Pacific.

After the debacle of 1893 which forced the final abdication of Henry Villard, Morgan and Hill had taken over in the inevitable reorganization. Neither of them cared a fig about the road except to keep it from becoming a dangerous rival to Hill's Great Northern system. Lack of interest probably was one factor which led Morgan, whenever he needed immediate money for some of his many ventures, to sell a block of Northern Pacific and thus endanger his rather loose control of the property. Harriman, on the other hand, *was* interested. With his new backing and with control of Northern Pacific, he stood an excellent chance of crushing his old enemies, Morgan and Hill, and eliminating them from further participation in the railroads' conquest of the West.

Morgan seemed quite unaware of his peril, because he sailed away as usual for his annual boiling-out at a French spa. Harriman, who had been quietly picking up Northern Pacific stock whenever it came on the market, now began bidding openly through Kuhn-Loeb and the Rockefeller banks for control. Hill rushed to New York, found Morgan's partners overconfident and reluctant to disturb the boss. Hill forced action. Morgan got the news.

What would he do? Not to fight meant the loss of his railroad empire. To fight against such odds meant risking everything, even the very existence of J. P. Morgan & Co. He fought.

Directing the battle from the office of Morgan, Harjes *et Cie,* three thousand miles away in Paris' Place Vendome, the roused giant delivered a series of blows against the triple threat of Harriman, Rockefeller, and the Schiffs so devastating that the walls of the buildings in Wall Street and Broad seemed to tremble and threaten to fall.

The detailed story of that titanic battle is too long and too complicated to tell here. Suffice it to know that it was Pierpont Morgan's greatest fight and greatest victory. At the risk of a downfall even more cataclysmic than Jay Cooke's in 1873, Pierpontifex Maximus proved to his would-be destroyers that he was still the one and only Mahatma of Manhattan Toe.

40

SO IT WAS THAT WHEN J. P. MORGAN OF THE HOUSE OF MORGAN summoned all the assistant Manhattan Mahatmas to his beautiful library on Murray Hill and told them that they must be good little boys and stop panicking, they did. There remained, of course, the little matter of fixing things up with T.R., but the tactful Davison, who handled for the boss this delicate part of the negotiations, was equal to the occasion. The bankers and the politicians stopped grousing and began co-operating.

New York recovered even more quickly after this panic than in 1873 and 1893. By 1909 it was in a mood for a party, and began looking around for something or someone to pin it on. Perhaps on the principle that neither was worth more than half a celebration, the Grover Whalens of the day ganged up on Henry Hudson and Robert Fulton and gave them a joint one.

A more successful attempt than Hudson's to reach the Pacific via Manhattan Island was made this year when five horseless carriages—an Acme, a Shawmut, an Itala, and two Model-T Fords—lined up in front of the City Hall for the first transcontinental auto race. Twenty-two days and fifty-five minutes later, the winner, Ford Car Number 2—with New York air still in its two front tires—rolled into the grounds of the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition in Seattle. Mr. Robert Guggenheim, who awarded the prize,

opined: "I believe Mr. Ford has the solution of the problem of the popular automobile."

Nevertheless, Henry Ford was not yet listed in *Who's Who*, and was not to be for another five years; also, his financial prospects were thought little of on Manhattan Toe. In fact, nobody outside of Michigan and a few scattered points in Ohio thought much of the automobile business as an investment. J. Pierpont Morgan is said to have refused to buy $5,000,000 worth of automobile securities which were later valued at more than $200,000,000. Even in Detroit there were rumblings of doubt. Walter Flanders told Henry Ford: "This new plaything of yours won't sell." Frederick J. Haynes refused a $2,500-a-year job with the Ford company because he didn't think Henry could afford to pay the salary. On Manhattan Toe, Chauncey Depew advised his nephew not to invest five thousand dollars in Ford stock.

"Nothing," oracled Chauncey, "has come along to beat the horse."

But, beginning in 1914, the Ford joke swept the country. You know: "Why is Henry Ford a better evangelist than Billy Sunday?" "Because he has shaken hell out of more people than Billy ever did." Etc., etc. The jokes were so popular that even the skeptical financiers on Manhattan Toe began to think there might be something in this automobile business. Then Henry himself perpetrated the worst Ford joke of all: sending the Peace Ship to Europe to get the boys out of the trenches before Christmas. His future and the future of the automobile industry were henceforth assured!

Postpanic women still proclaimed their unemancipation by their clothes. Even business girls on Manhattan Toe wore gored skirts, very full and just touching the ground. Knees were unknown. The "bertha" was popular around the bust, the "peplum" around the waist. Hats were unbelievably wide, set high, and sometimes tipped up on one side to display a ten-inch bunch of artificial violets next to the hair. Narrow sleeves stopped just below the elbow. Feather boas ruched remarkably. The waist was short and said to be natural. It wasn't to the touch.

In 1909 Manhattan Toe was still smarting under the Roosevelt whip. In 1912 it experienced the goad of Woodrow Wilson. Perhaps you remember the situation. Mr. Roosevelt, after more than

Courtesy of the Museum of the City of New York

WALL STREET, FROM BROADWAY, ABOUT 1895

Courtesy of the New York Stock Exchange

NEW YORK STOCK EXCHANGE

(Last day in the old building, April 26, 1901)

seven years at the White House breakfast table, decided that his cup of coffee had been full and overflowing—that he would not ask to have it filled again. This was at a time when he could have had all of Mocha for the asking, with most of Java thrown in. Four years later, the Colonel revised his decision and called for another cup. But this time the politicians, after much hurrying and scurrying between pantry and kitchen, decided that there was no more coffee in the pot.

Then it was that T.R. turned to the more heady beverage of Progressivism. Many young men of both parties turned with him, drank of the new cup, became intoxicated with the new hope, only to discover, after the election dishes had been cleared away, that the real food had been gobbled by Woodrow Wilson, another progressive and a stranger at the national feast. The leavings, no matter how you looked at them, weren't likely to be nourishing for Manhattan Toe.

War had broken out in Europe in the summer of 1914. Few thought we would ever be in it. "One of those Balkan things," people said. Even so knowledgeable a person as the president of the New York Stock Exchange seemed mainly concerned with the fact that "the scantiness of woman's underdress had reduced the consumption of cotton fabrics by at least twelve yards of finished goods for each adult female inhabitant."

However, other and more serious catastrophes were soon engaging the attention of downtown New York. Shipping was the first to feel the squeeze. "Commerce with Europe practically ceased," reported *A Maritime History of New York*. "The New York Stock Exchange closed; bankers refused to accept bills of lading as collateral. Marine-insurance rates rocketed, and prices of domestic and imported goods soared. Committees to consider the situation sprang up everywhere." And gradually the problem which began to absorb the attention of thinking men not only in New York but throughout the nation was whether or not we should enter the war.

Theodore Roosevelt, who controlled more Republican votes than any other man, favored war at any cost. William Jennings Bryan, who controlled more Democratic votes than any other man, favored peace at any price. Woodrow Wilson, who controlled the machinery of government, favored watchful waiting. Every poli-

tically minded person on Manhattan Toe who could see in front of him beyond his nose, or on either side of him beyond his ears, was presumably in sympathy with one of these three views—until a series of physical shocks made opinions and theories suddenly academic.

On May 4, 1915, the steamship *Lusitania,* torpedoed by a German submarine off the Irish coast, sank with the loss of 1,195 lives, 124 of them Americans. Many notables, familiar figures on Manhattan Toe, were among the lost, including a Vanderbilt, Alfred Gwynne. Curiously enough, three years before, John Jacob Astor, fourth of the name in America and the one with whom Frederick Law Olmsted is supposed to have had his negotiations in regard to Captain Kidd's treasure, had been among those who went down with the *Titanic.* There was, of course, no special significance to this coincidence; but both names, so reminiscent of earlier days, still meant a good deal to life on Manhattan Toe.

Reaction to the two disasters in downtown New York, however, was quite different. In 1912 there had been a feeling that the shipping people were being unjustly blamed for what was, after all, an act of God, and a genuine admiration for those who, like Astor, bravely chose to go down with the ship. In 1915 there was only one feeling: belated realization that our entry into the war was inevitable. The Black Tom explosion the following year, in which dynamite-laden barges were blown skyward, the harbor raked with shrapnel, and a million dollars' worth of plate glass shattered in downtown skyscrapers, deepened this conviction. Nine months later the country was at war.

Even then, nine men out of ten on Manhattan Toe believed that the appearance of the American flag on the western front was all that was necessary to win the victory. Some had suggested sending Leonard Wood with a picked group of regulars; others, Colonel Roosevelt with new "Rough Riders." Nobody had mentioned Pershing. Nobody, except a few informed people in close touch with the European situation, envisaged two million American boys under arms in France and two million more in camp here ready to sail.

If Toeites said their prayers, they said them with song:

> Pack up your troubles in your old kit bag
> And smile, smile, smile!

That was the spirit. "Good-by, Broadway, hello, France!" "Where do we go from here?" A big parade. Yes. But signs all along the line of march: "Business as Usual." However, the sight of hundreds of thousands of uniformed men detraining at terminals and embarking at docks could not long be ignored. The town was brown with khaki-clad doughboys; its dance floors were awhirl with gobs and girls. Movie stars, led by Mary and Doug, took over Wall Street to sell liberty bonds to the open-mouthed and the open-handed.

On the sidewalks of downtown New York brokers and brokers' clerks were talking strange words and stranger phrases: conscientious objectors, hyphens, camouflage, T.N.T., profiteers, enemy aliens, the bridge of ships, swivel chairs, strafing, gasless Sundays, heatless Mondays, meatless Thurdays, somewhere in France, "Lafayette, we are here!"

Women especially became war-conscious. They invaded Manhattan Toe in increasing numbers: some to take the places of the boys at the front, more to perform the voluntary services to which they devoted themselves unceasingly. They were indefatigable in taking military censuses. They sat in drafty hallways and fetid restaurants to collect membership dollars for the Red Cross. They risked their lives buttonholing traffic on innumerable tag days. They donned gray-green uniforms and overseas caps and drove fat, blowsy colonels through the tangled downtown traffic.

As early as 1914, Europe had turned for financial salvation to the House of Morgan. Jupiter Pluvius had died in 1913, but his son, J. P. Morgan the Younger, a great tweedy fellow who looked more like an Englishman than John Bull himself, had long been a familiar and respected figure in the capitals of the world; and equally familiar and respected were his company's two European affiliates in London and Paris. Moreover, there had appeared as if from nowhere, although its existence had been foreshadowed by Harry Davison's 1907 activities, that unique factor in American life: the Morgan partner. There were several of them; but little enough had been heard of them until old J.P. died. Once his towering personality ceased to cast its shadow, they emerged in brilliance; and when war came, the address of the most powerful financial institution in the world was still 23 Wall.

These Morgan partners were mostly New Englanders, upstate New Yorkers, and Middle Westerners. All of them were of indisputably Aryan ancestry. In view of the leadership—one might almost say the monopoly—which they exercised in the conduct of the money side of our foreign relations both before and after our entry into the war, the often repeated charges of anti-Semites that a band of Jewish international bankers maneuvered us into the conflict for their own financial advantage would seem to be about as ridiculous as continued championing of the wholly discredited so-called Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion.

Davison himself, until commandeered by President Wilson for the Red Cross, was a driving force in consummating the prodigious task of financing the Allied side of the European war; and after him came Tom Lamont, a gentle man whose smile is like an open fire in a cold house. So successfully did Lamont's quiet diplomacy lubricate the always delicate machinery of this country's dealings with its allies-to-be and later with its allies that when President Wilson went to Europe to conclude what he believed to be the peace, he found Lamont stronger in every capital in Europe than any member of his administration. Some said it was too bad, for the country, that Lamont was not secretary of state in Wilson's cabinet, but it was good, for Morgan's, that he was not.

Not only did the House of Morgan shoulder the major portion of the burden of financing the Allies, but, as purchasing agent for Britain and France, it was chiefly responsible for spending the money that it helped to raise. For this special job it reached out into the industrial field and grabbed a specialist, Edward R. Stettinius, who had been a machinery manufacturer in St. Louis, and was then president of the Diamond Match Company. Stettinius did such a workmanlike job that, after our entry into the war, he became successively surveyor general of supplies for the War Department, member of the War Council, assistant secretary of war, and U.S. representative on the Interallied Munitions Council in Paris.

Meanwhile, war or no war, the fight for a more equable distribution of wealth staggered on. Large incomes increased. So did small ones. Middle-sized incomes remained about the same. Expenses more than doubled. Families of profiteers had a swell time.

So did families of laborers. Families of professional men didn't. There was some groaning, but little active rebellion. The average man, even on Manhattan Toe, had only one answer for everything that was happening:

"C'est la guerre."

41

IN THE EXCITEMENT OF WAR FEW PEOPLE LOOKED UP FROM THEIR knitting or their bond-buying to watch the last New York City horsecar bump along Chambers Street to the river and up West Street to oblivion. But the appointment of the "radical" Boston lawyer, Louis B. Brandeis, to the Supreme Court caused a near-panic on Manhattan Toe. Edward L. Doheny, later of Teapot Dome infame, told Clarence W. Barron that President Eliot of Harvard was teaching bolshevism. William Boyce Thompson, Frank Vanderlip, Charles R. Crane were also on his bolshevist list; and Thomas W. Lamont, he thought, was in danger of becoming a convert.

Manhattan Toe had other worries: John F. ("Red Mike") Hylan was elected mayor of New York.

Hylan was the creature—one might almost say the creation—of a Manhattan Toeite who seldom came in person to the Toe, but who exercised for more than four decades a definitely terrifying influence on that community—William Randolph Hearst.

Hearst had been waging first one bitter political battle and then another, getting himself cordially, and many thought justly, disliked. As a Democrat, he went twice to the House of Representatives. Without the support of any party, he came within three thousand votes of being elected mayor of New York. He ran unsuccessfully but vigorously for governor of New York State, and "loomed," as they say in the Washington dispatches, as a

probable candidate for the presidency. When he was not running himself, he was dictating nominations and influencing elections. In short, he became in the field of politics as well as in the field of journalism enormously powerful and thoroughly anathematized. A rich man, he had turned against rich men. On Manhattan Toe he was deeply hated as—the phrase has a familiar sound!—a traitor to his class.

Hylan's job was to carry on Hearst's fight. The platform on which he was elected meant continued trouble for the city's already financially "busted" rapid-transit system and for the bankers in downtown New York who had bought and sold its bonds. But neither Hearst nor Hylan gave the backers a tear. They were for "the five-cent fare." That was their story, and they stuck to it.

The five-cent fare is, as you may or may not know, the world's most famous nickel. If you live in darkest Queens or farthest Bronx, it is what you drop in the subway slot to make the entrance gate go clickety-click, so you can ride in sardine comfort from your home to City Hall. If you live in City Hall, it is what you lift on high as the symbol of civic liberty and corporate bankruptcy to keep the voters from sending you back to the Bronx or Queens. If ever money talked, it is this same nickel. For eight long years, it talked through Hylan's hat.

Hearst, of course, knew what he was doing: he was selling papers. It is doubtful if Hylan ever did, about this or any other matter of municipal import. The man's ignorance was colossal. His clashes with the knowledgeable Al Smith, who was then president of the Board of Aldermen, were notable. On one occasion, when the Board of Estimate was discussing a new tunnel under the Hudson River, His Honor suddenly burst out with:

"This tunnel, now—is it your plan to build it by the open cut or by the bore method?"

"A tunnel under a river by an open cut!" exclaimed Al Smith. "You'd have to hire fish to build it!"

Red Mike combined with this almost unbelievable ignorance an equally colossal self-satisfaction. Someone said that his theme song should have been "We flipped the Light Bombastic on the Sidewalks of New York." Certainly he laid himself open to some of the newspaper boys' sharpest thrusts by covering those side-

walks, and the streets and hoardings adjacent thereto, with the most blatantly boastful statements that this, that, and the other public improvement—paid for, of course, by the public's money—was being accomplished, apparently singlehanded, by "John F. Hylan, Mayor of New York."

This tendency to claim everything in sight became so extreme that when the Vincent Astors gave a party to which they felt they really ought to invite the mayor of the city, it is said that they refrained from doing so for fear of rising the next morning to find a great sign across the front of their Fifth Avenue mansion, reading: "MAYOR HYLAN'S ASTORS."

In spite of its Hylans, New York had grown into a very big town. More Italians than Rome; more Irishmen than Dublin; more Jews than Jerusalem. More telephones than London, Paris, Berlin, Rome, and Leningrad combined. If those figures don't talk, these should: New York was eating 4,500,000 *tons* of food every year—85,000,000 pounds of onions, 435,000,000 pounds of bananas, 450,000,000 pounds of pork, and 525,000,000 pounds of sugar.

Enforced contact with the rest of the world had also given the town a sophistication which it had not had before the European war. The clerks and stenographers of lower New York were among the first to show the metamorphosis. The postwar male shaved early and often; he wore white collars or the even more fashionable blue ones; he looked more like the clothing advertisements than would seem to be humanly possible. The postwar female was engaged in an epochal struggle for youth. The result, of course, was a good deal of ridiculousness: old faces on young bodies, young faces on old bodies, fat legs in thin stockings, wide hips in narrow skirts, nobody old, nobody young, more grotesqueness than beauty; but withal a modicum of sense.

Less superficial changes were also on the march. Before the war, most people read stories, and only stories. The circulation of a serious book was very closely limited to the number of serious libraries in the country. This was owing chiefly to the fact that serious books were written in such a dull way. Mr. Wells changed that. Another thing happened—Sinclair Lewis. What Wells had done for the past, Lewis was doing for the present. What the Englishman had done for history, the American was doing for sociology. Serious reading was the order of the day. Downy-haired

flappers tucked up their bobs and rolled down their stockings and went to it.

On Manhattan Toe the changes were far from superficial. During the war years the national debt had increased from less than two billion to more than twenty-five billion dollars. Even the latter figure is scarcely folding money nowadays, as government expenditures go, but in 1918 it was scarifying. In the world market we had become a creditor nation. At home, we were overextended in industry and agriculture. Workers were all dressed up with no place to go. Farmers, having fattened on fantastic prices, faced lean years. Land bought at war levels did not cover its mortgages at peace levels. Inflation was a fact, not a threat. The purchasing power of the dollar had sunk from one hundred cents to less than fifty.

These changes affected the entire nation, but no part of it so quickly or so acutely as Manhattan Toe. Here, on the world's largest financial stage, was acted out the drama of the "new rich" and the "new poor." As astute Mark Sullivan pointed out, "Those who had fixed incomes, who lived upon the returns from bonds, mortgages and rents—and these had been a large portion of the wealthy—had become the 'new poor'... The 'new rich' were those whose wealth was in lands, goods, shares in corporations, and who therefore profited by the rise in prices." In the lower-income brackets there were the same violent changes: the man with a flexible wage was in luck; the man with a fixed salary was out of luck. There was nervousness on Manhattan Toe, and discontent, and fear. Finally, in the early reconversion years, there were hard times and near-panic.

The rest of the city and the rest of the country, except for a few college professors who not only felt the personal pinch but appreciated the larger significance of these changed conditions, seemed little concerned about them.

One reason was that people were tired of trying to live up to Woodrow Wilson and his intellectual point of view on life. Those whom he had not wearied, he had offended. That was inevitable. The controversial politician must controverse. He must scold the many for not following the lead of the few. He must be an unwelcome guest in most people's houses. And he is. The more he controverses, the more unwelcome he is sure to be. If he happens

to miss somebody's toes today, he squashes them tomorrow. Even without spikes it hurts. And he appeals to the relatively small number of people who wish to be argued with, convinced, reformed. And only to those people when they are in a mood in which they do not mind being stepped on. And that, in most of us, is a rare mood.

So Warren Gamaliel Harding was elected president of the United States. That fact, according to our political bringing up, may have meant almost anything. To some it meant normalcy. To others, nullity. To most it meant the pleasantly exhausted state in which they found themselves at the end of the First World War. So they relaxed, and got a vicarious thrill out of talking about the effect of sex magazines and sex movies on the ever recurring problem of the younger generation. With a condescension which they hoped would pass as tolerance or even gallantry, they passed the suffrage amendment. A considerable number of them, including a sizable delegation from Manhattan Toe, journeyed over to Boyle's Acres on the Jersey side to see Jack Dempsey and "Georgeous Georges" Carpentier. (If they arrived a little late, they saw only Dempsey.) No one in 1921, on or off the Toe, realized the fireside-chat implications when President Harding bought himself one of the new radios and set it up in the presidential study.

New York had staggered along since the war with only one top-draw hero, Babe Ruth. In 1927, when Charles Augustus "Slim" Lindbergh made the first eastbound transatlantic solo flight, it acquired another. Unsentimental Manhattan Toe was strangely charmed. This observer was visiting in the city room of one great metropolitan daily when word came that the unknown flyer had taken off into the unknown sky. You have been to the movies. You know what a city room is like—or do you? Real newspapermen are always saying that reel-life newspaper offices are the bunk. And they are. But not for the reason you think. Newspaper life isn't better than the movies picture it. It's worse—and how they love it!

Well, there they were: rough, shirt-sleeved, cigarette-smoking, coffee-drinking, green-visored men—and a half-dozen women, tolerated, but not coddled—banging typewriters, slashing copy, snatching flimsies, swearing, spitting, getting out the next edition.

Nothing else seemed important. But when the Lindbergh news came through, it came *through,* biting and hacking its way past those hard-boiled exteriors into the holy of holies which even newspaper people keep locked up in their breasts; and what took place in that smoke-filled room was the nearest thing to a spontaneous moment of silent prayer that I have ever witnessed.

The men and women of the American press gave their hearts with their hopes—a bit rashly, perhaps—to Lindy that day. There wasn't a man in the room, I believe, who wouldn't have been proud to have him as a son, not a woman who wouldn't have been proud to have him for a husband.

No one stopped to think that Lindbergh's flight across the Atlantic, gloriously moving as it was at the time, had been in its genesis nothing but a publicity stunt. *The Spirit of St. Louis* was to the shrewd businessmen who had paid for it—two of the eight were the brothers Lambert, who, through skillful publicity, have done so much to make the world mouth-wash conscious—simply what the St. Louis World's Fair had been a couple of decades before, what the New York World's Fair was to Grover Whalen in 1939, a means of advertising their city and attracting money to its marts of trade.

Two years later, when Lindbergh chose as his wife the charming daughter of Morgan partner Dwight Morrow, Manhattan Toe was even more interested. Wall Streeters had always wanted as president "one of their own kind." I remember crossing the ocean right after the First World War with Seward Prosser, head of one of the Street's biggest banks, who told me that he and his friends were seriously canvassing the possibility of electing Henry P. Davison, a Morgan partner, on the strength of his wartime Red Cross achievements. Fires of hope had again flamed feebly in the shadows of old Trinity when Dwight Morrow himself crashed the American political scene. But here was a natural: a popular hero, married into the family of a Morgan partner, but untarred with the Wall Street brush.

Subsequent events successfully pricked this bubble. When the flyer came back from his second "flight" to Europe, after accepting a medal from Hitler at the hands of Goering, to tell his countrymen that "England cannot win this war, no matter how much assistance we send," no one was more outspoken in opposition to

her son-in-law's defeatism program than that fine woman, Elizabeth Morrow; and on the very day Charles Lindbergh resigned his commission in the United States Army, Dwight Morrow's partner and closest friend, Thomas W. Lamont, active head of the House of Morgan, delivered an eloquent address urging all-out aid to the democracies.

But while Manhattan Toe was indulging in dreams of political grandeur, another tragic chapter was being written in the serial story of the nation's transatlantic merchant marine. New York Harbor, which had been the chief port of embarkation for American troops, now became the chief port of disembarkation. For the first time in years, ships flying the Stars and Stripes dominated the incoming sea traffic. Everybody said that henceforth America, not Britannia, would rule the sea. But nobody did anything about it. The war-built merchant marine was junked, just as it is being junked again today. Americans don't seem to want to have anything to do with ships except to ride in them.

However, New Yorkers continued to pay out good money to make the harbor safe for foreigners, and in 1921 they were joined in this project by their Jersey neighbors through the formation of the Port of New York Authority. But this bistate nonprofit corporation, an excellent practical example of the good-neighbor policy, proceeded to give some thought, also, to the inhabitants of the two states which front on the great bay. It constructed the Lincoln Tunnel under the Hudson River, and refinanced and operated the Holland Tunnel; then, going aboveground, it built the George Washington Bridge over the Hudson at 179th Street, and three smaller bridges between Staten Island and the New Jersey mainland. It also built Inland Terminal No. 1, New York's first "union station for package freight."

Meanwhile, New York Harbor had itself become a union station for one special variety of packaged freight: bootleg liquor. At first, the rum ships, as they were quaintly called since they carried practically no rum, steamed brazenly past the Statue of Liberty and dumped their loads of near-Scotch whisky and near-French champagne on the docks of Manhattan Toe. But as the enforcement authorities become more troublesome, the incoming ships anchored three miles out in Rum Row, and waited for high-powered speedboats to lighten their burdens during the night.

The plan worked beautifully for a while. Then the highjacker, a pocket edition of the pirates of Governor Fletcher's day, moved in on the rumrunners, and the naval Battle of Volstead was sharply joined. Victory perched from night to night on the banners of whichever faction could buy the fastest boats fastest, and the loss of life was considerable both en route and after the cargoes reached the stomachs of the ultimate consumers.

The Drunken Twenties—and how drunken they were! People drank who had never drunk before. And what stuff! And at what prices! And in what quantities! The tide rose and rose—and Pussyfoot Johnson proved quite as ineffective as the late Canute in commanding it to recede.

In New York City, before prohibition, there had been 15,000 places where a man could get a drink. Shortly after prohibition began, there were 32,000. Before prohibition ended, there were more drinking places in the city than there had previously been in all New York State. And, contrary to the general impression, many of them were located on Manhattan Toe. Office bars also appeared. Daytime drinking became the accepted thing in the Wall Street counting rooms. The twenty-four-hour consumption of the average downtown New Yorker rose during prohibition from four fingers to fifteen.

To the credit of the men on Manhattan Toe it should be said that they took almost no part in the vast business of financing this illegal traffic, of participating in its huge profits. A new type of financier, spawned by the situation, who was unreachable by the tax collector and apparently by the law, monopolized the trade. Normally, the liquor industry, although it represented less than 1 per cent of our total manufactures, paid one twelfth of our taxes—was, in fact, our number one taxpayer. The new illegal liquor industry paid nothing—except for protection. Politicians grew rich. So did policemen. The taxpayer grew poorer.

Manhattan Toe chose this moment to erect a new Liberty Pole on the site of the old one in the Fields. Al Smith, Manhattan Toe's sole surviving Toe-born Liberty Boy, was among those present. Three years later, the Happy Warrior was again in there fighting for liberty of sorts at the Democratic National Convention, where a leather-lunged Southern gentleman announced interminably that "Alabama casts eighteen votes for Oscar W.

Underwood." Oscar didn't win. Neither did Al. But John W. Davis did: Davis is now the most sought-after lawyer on Manhattan Toe.

There were, then as now, many kinds of lawyers in downtown New York: corporation lawyers, criminal lawyers, divorce lawyers, shyster lawyers, *and* Tammany lawyers. The latter were reasonably sure of a good rich living from cases which involved getting favors from Tammany-elected and Tammany-appointed officials. The bigger and better corporation lawyers often employed these legal politicos to get favorable action out of the city departments. One who was increasingly often called upon to handle this delicate legal work was that song-writer-turned-statesman, James J. "Love Me in December" Walker. Even the "Morgan law firm" of White and Case availed itself of his services. And Jimmie, who boasted that he had never read more than twelve books, including schoolbooks and lawbooks, did right well for himself.

Jimmie was doing all right politically, too. In the State Senate he had risen to the post of majority leader, and had proved himself what O. O. MacIntyre described as "a news Vesuvius." His newspaper pals from Park Row and uptown broadcast his every saying throughout the metropolitan press. Off the floor of the Assembly as well as on, Jimmie's words were widely quoted and widely read.

Jimmie was in no sense a creation of these newspaper boys. He was not "built up" as a radio or movie star is built up into a personality which in fact does not exist outside the imagination of a press agent. He had no press agent; and he did not need one. He was himself—and as such he was copy.

"Well, Jimmie," some reporter would ask, "do you think prohibition will last forever?"

"Perhaps it will," the obliging senator would reply, "if it ever gets started." Or, "Will Al Smith go to Washington?"

"He will if there's a truckman's convention there."

Just like that! No wonder Jimmie became the newsman's delight—and no wonder they became his friends!

So, when Smith and the others began looking around for a man who could beat the perennial Hylan, who was threatening to develop into a perpetual mayor as well as a perpetual bore,

they naturally—one might almost say inevitably—bethought themselves of the nonboring Jimmie.

"What sort of a mayor would Jimmie Walker make?" one district leader was asked.

"A lousy mayor,"was the reply, "but, oh, boy, what a candidate! *What* a candidate!"

Jimmie's reception of the news that he was to be nominated was typical of the man. "Say!" he called to his friends in the Senate press box. "If you've got cracked lips, don't listen—but they tell me I'm to be the next mayor of New York!"

Meanwhile, soldiers in that other war which had been fought to make the world safe for something or other—certainly not for democracy, as the ensuing years proved—devoted themselves more or less bewilderedly to the battles of peace. Other New Yorkers sought the solutions of their personal troubles in the philosophy of a little goateed man from Nancy, France: above the tickers of the brokers' offices on Manhattan Toe rose the rhythm, "Every day in every way I am getting better and better." Still others went south and bought Florida water by the acre. Some even invested in Dr. Cook's oil projects. Then, with an impact which was catastrophic, came the maddest hocus-pocus of them all: Coolidge prosperity.

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MOST MANHATTAN TOEITES ARE REPUBLICANS, AND OUT OF gratitude they should be. Once, when an assassin's bullet saved Theodore Roosevelt from a fate worse than death, the vice-presidency, the Grand Old Party inadvertently failed them; but generally the election of a Republican candidate for president meant that happy days were here again, or still, for them. Consequently, the election in 1920 of their handsome hero, Warren Gamaliel Harding, had been most comforting. But when he died, after two and a half troubled years in the White House, they were—what shall we say?—relieved.

It was not that Harding had proved difficult. He had proved too easy. (The government at Washington must be pliable, but not too publicly pliable!) And some of the old pals he had gathered around him had shown signs of being more than easy. Two of his cabinet members were brought to trial on charges unbecoming an officer of any man's administration: one for accepting a little black bag filled with $100,000 in bank notes from Edward L. Doheny and $260,000 in bonds from Harry F. Sinclair; and the other, for being allegedly involved in horrendous scandals in the conduct of the Alien Property Custodian's office. The Custodian himself, a Harding appointee, went to prison for conspiracy; and the head of the Veterans' Bureau for fraud. The middle man in many of these transactions, an old friend of

Courtesy of the Museum of the City of New York

WALL STREET FROM THE ROOF OF THE IRVING TRUST COMPANY BUILDING, 1938

(Photograph by Berenice Abbott, Federal Art Project, "Changing New York")

Courtesy of the Museum of the City of New York

BROADWAY TO THE BATTERY, 1938

(Photograph by Berenice Abbott, Federal Art Project, "Changing New York")

Harding's, allegedly shot himself under very suspicious circumstances. The whole "Ohio gang" stank.

What was worse: some of the trails which led from these misdoings in high places, especially the smellier oil ones, led straight to Manhattan Toe. Doheny and Harry Sinclair, the two oilers involved in the scandalous Elk Hills–Teapot Dome affairs, were brought to trial; Sinclair actually spent some months in a Washington jail for refusing to answer questions either to the Congressional investigating committee or to the court. Several other oil men, while under Senatorial investigation, left the country. In short, there were whiffs on the banks both of the Potomac and the Hudson that were not "Sabean odours from the spicy shores of Araby the Blest," on which the coming of a man like Vice-President Calvin Coolidge to the White House could be depended upon to act as a sort of Airwick.

For Coolidge was pure. He *must* be pure. He was born in a notoriously pure state, Vermont. Since being born, except for putting down a strike—which never disqualified any entry in a Wall Street baby show—there was nothing to show that he had ever done anything—or ever read anything, ever said anything, or even ever thought anything. He was much more the man nobody knew than the Man that Bruce Barton was writing about. So, in the Toeites' book, Calvin Coolidge would make an ideal president—and for six incredible years he did not let them down.

It was a splendid time for a nonentity to become president of the United States—that is, from the nonentity's standpoint. If he kept his mouth shut, he couldn't lose. The country had been through its postwar miseries. The strikes had come and gone. The battle with the high cost of living had been fought and lost, and forgotten. Some of the returning veterans had at last got jobs. Mitchell Palmer's red-baiting had ceased.

The last-named circumstance had become suddenly important to the inmates of Manhattan Toe. Not because Russian doctrines had become any more palatable to them. (To this day, the only thing Russian that Manhattan Toeites can stomach is caviar—and somehow even that hasn't tasted half so good since the Czar left for Siberia!) They had rejoiced when the baiting began, but some of the people who didn't rejoice decided to blow up the House of Morgan; and the resulting explosion, which killed thirty

and injured a hundred and smashed most of the windows fronting on Broad and Wall, made more of an impression on some people than the war had done. To be sure, most of the victims this time were clerks and runners and stenographers, but you never could tell. One Morgan partner did get his hand cut by a piece of flying glass! Obviously, what the country needed, even more than Tom Marshall's good five-cent cigar, was a political calm.

Coolidge was it. Another president, with all of the government's delicate instruments for predicting financial weather at his disposal, might have disturbed the calm by warning the people of what he should have known was about to happen to them. Perhaps he didn't know. Perhaps he didn't choose to warn. Anyhow, so far as the record shows, the man who was at the head of the government during the fatal "boom years," when the nation plunged down the familiar road which leads inevitably to panic and depression, saw nothing, heard nothing, said nothing.

This was just fine from Wall Street's 1923 viewpoint. There are so many progressive men on the Toe today that it is hard to realize the hard-boiled conservatism, so far as politics went, of the money men of the twenties. Perhaps the best way is to recall that, whereas no one on the Toe had objected to Harding having in his cabinet Albert Fall and Edward Denby and Harry Daugherty, almost everybody was genuinely alarmed because he had appointed as his secretary of commerce a man who was to them a thoroughgoing radical, Herbert Hoover. In January, 1923, seven months before Harding died and Coolidge succeeded to the throne, S. Davies Warfield, who was president of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, and incidentally the Duchess of Windsor's beloved Uncle Sol, said: "Harding had been badly advised by Hoover . . . the most dangerous man in the cabinet."

What Wall Street wasn't conservative about was taking the public's money. It was a process which it had learned early, when it was little more than a cow path beside Peter Stuyvesant's wall, and had perfected through centuries of uninterrupted practice. But never before had the wrecking crew received such efficient first aid from Washington, and not since Jay Gould's time had there been such a wrecking crew. Mention had been made of the fact that the big men of Manhattan Toe took no part in financing the bootlegging enterprises of prohibition. As much credit, per-

haps more, belongs to them for not precipitating Coolidge prosperity. On the boom roster of the twenties few of the old names appear, and few of the new names were indigenous to the Toe. Naturally, when the surge got under way, they sought to profit by it—even as you and I, and the cook in the kitchen and the policeman on his beat—but they didn't start the darn thing; and the thought must be mighty comforting to those of them who survived the headaches it entailed.

The original boomers were mostly outsiders, many of them from the fabulously successful automobile business: John J. Raskob for one, and W. C. Durant and the brothers Fisher. These men had experience and, within limits, vision. Experience told them of the grip that the motorcar already had on the popular imagination. Vision told them of the grip that radio was about to have. They bought General Motors stock and radio stock, boosted the price, and waited.

These men knew that there was no reason, except their own cupidity, for the so-called boom. During most of it, business was something less than fair. I mean legitimate business, the kind people earn a living at by making or doing something that people need or think they need. The country had been through a great deal. It was exhausted. Recovery was present, but spotty; readjustment was universal, but painful. Not only was there no reason for a bull market, but no excuse.

Yet, whenever stock quotations showed signs of receding to normal levels, the market was promptly benzedrined by "pep talks" from President Coolidge or Andy Mellon, so-called "greatest secretary of the treasury since Alexander Hamilton." Maybe Coolidge was just stupid. Certainly Mellon was not. At least the timing was wonderful. The sister act of the wreckers in Washington and the wreckers in Wall Street went over like the Duncan Sisters in their Palace heyday. The sisters' favorite ditty, it might be well to recall, was at that time "Faw' Down and Go Boom."

Henry Ford had something to do with it, too, but innocently. He had chosen this moment to junk his old Model T and concentrate on Model A. That meant, to the Detroit-wise, that he wouldn't be making any cars for at least a year. A little discreet publicity on this point acquainted the public with the fact that this was G.M.'s opportunity. So, when inside-outsiders like Raskob,

the man who put the nation on a monthly-payment basis, who was vice-president and financial head of the huge Du Pont business, which had grown to Gargantuan proportions during the war, and of its giant ally, the General Motors Corporation, began plunging on G.M. stock, the general public just naturally did the same thing on a wholesale scale—but at the old established retail margin of 10 per cent.

In short, the popular imagination responded as per schedule. Mass production of suckers ensued far beyond anything envisaged by the big assembly-line and combustion-engine men from Detroit. The popular song of the day was "Don't Bring Lulu," but Lulu came. So did Frankie and Johnnie, and Hot Lips, and Mr. Gallagher and Mr. Shean, and the Sheik of Araby. Postmen, butlers, street-cleaners, chambermaids, bus boys, widows and orphans, even women and children complete with husbands and fathers, became near-millionaires—on paper. The number of shares bought and sold in a single day passed the million mark. By the spring of 1928, when the final upsurge began, professional prophets were saying that if the boom went on indefinitely, as they were sure it would, there might sometime be a five-million-share day. On October 29, 1929, there was a sixteen-million-share day.

A wonderful book could and should be written about the fabulous years which preceded the cataclysm. Several not-so-wonderful ones have been written. Perhaps it is too early for *the* book; certainly too early for anything like an over-all appraisal in these brief paragraphs. Fortunately, however, for both reader and writer, we are not concerned here with the nation-wide privations and demoralizations which resulted from this merciless exploitation of the American people, except as they affect that small speck on the map of the world which lies between the Battery and the Fields.

The men who started the mess were, as we have seen, not Wall Streeters, and by and large the men who most typified the subsequent insanity of the period were not old-family Manhattan Toeites, not Vanderbilts, Astors, and Morgans, but Raskobs. Many of them were not New Yorkers. And some of the most typical were not even Americans.

I give you that modern Count of Monte Cristo, Alfred Lowenstein, who landed on Manhattan Toe with four secretaries, two stenographers, a private detective, a chauffeur, a masseur, a valet,

and a personal aviator; who occupied eight suites on the liner and spent $3,000 on radiograms; who owned a castle near Brussels, a house in London, a country estate in Leicestershire, and eight villas in Biarritz; who kept a retinue of boxing instructors, billiard experts, tennis players, and golf, racket, and fencing professionals; who maintained a fleet of private airplanes, each equipped like an office, to transport his guests and business associates from the various capitals of Europe to wherever he might be; who died finally, at the height of his power, by dropping six thousand feet into the English Channel.

The obvious significance of the Lowenstein visit was that Wall Street had succeeded Lombard Street and the Place de la Bourse as the financial capital of the world. The inner significance, or so it has always seemed to this observer, was that nobody knew who Lowenstein was, where he came from, and, except for the Channel water, where he went. He may have been a crook. He may have been a "good guy." Nobody ever knew because nobody asked any questions. Nobody asked any questions about anything because everybody knew that there was only one answer: not *"C'est la guerre!"* any more, but *"C'est la boom!"*

Lowenstein didn't seem so fabulous. The little people of Manhattan Toe—the clerks, stenographers, and board boys—were living lives quite as fantastic. The $20-a-week broker's clerk of yesterday was the gentleman of leisure to be seen today haunting the de luxe motor salons of upper Broadway trying to choose between the modest little $5,000 made-in-America number and the snooty imported model at $7,500. What were a couple of billiard experts and boxing instructors to that man? He, John Doe, could afford them if he wanted to, couldn't he? He could afford anything—even an expensive mayor like James John Walker.

In fact, this chronicler knows of nothing which better illustrates the mood of abandon in which Manhattan Toeites staggered through the incredible twenties than the presence on the Toe—and, more and more frequently, the absence from it—of the principal tenant of the Guildhall in the Fields.

His Honor's wanderings became major news events of a period which was quite the most exciting, from a news standpoint, in all the years which preceded the panic and followed the peace. Not only Lindbergh but Clarence Chamberlin flew the Atlantic,

and dragged Charlie Levine along with him to a vicarious and fleeting fame. The Hall-Mills trial drew eighteen columns a day in the *New York Times,* unmeasured acreage in the tabloids. The Sacco-Vanzetti furor waxed its highest and hottest. Ruth Snyder introduced the sash weight into the Hall of Fame. Nan Britton, that very much-on-the-record mother of an off-the-record baby, wrote *The President's Daughter.* Dwight Morrow left Morgan's and went to Mexico. The movies built the Paramount Theatre; and the distinguished artist George Luks, gazing at it, said, "Harry Thaw shot the wrong architect." Mr. M. F. Zyyzelli secured undisputed possession of the coveted last line in the New York telephone book. But none of these world-shaking events could crowd our Jimmie off the front page.

Prince Potesziani, governor of Rome, entertained him at what Jimmie described as "the best lunch I've ever drunk." The Prince made an eloquent speech in Italian, expressing pleasure in having as his guest "the Chief Magistrate of the greatest city in the world, of that fabulous city of incomparable development in which Anglo-Saxon energy with untiring activity has translated into actual fact the boldest conception of human thought."

"Prince," replied Jimmie, "if you said what I think you said, I'm grateful."

The newspaper boys—Jimmie's friends the world over—gave him a grand luncheon in Paris, at which, of course, he was properly late. The toastmaster, a man with a luxuriant red beard, had the temerity to chide the guest of honor good-naturedly for his delinquency. Jimmie accepted the challenge.

"All human sins," he said, "including tardiness, may be condoned—but as for whiskers, that's a man's own fault."

Back on Manhattan Toe, His Honor—the child of Coolidge prosperity and the gaudiest symbol of its cocksure futility—was equally "crack-happy." Arriving at the Hall, after a night's tour of the most glittering uptown bistros, he would call up Grover Whalen and ask, "Who's this bird I've got to greet today?" The inquiry referred to the practice of receiving distinguished visitors on the steps of the City Hall, which, from the moment of Walker's election, became almost a daily custom. Nothing was allowed to interfere with it. Jimmie would be presiding at an important meeting, when word would reach him that someone or something

was waiting to be welcomed out front. Immediately he would lay down his gavel and slip from the room.

On the steps, with his responsibilities behind him and the expectant crowd in front of him, Jimmie was sure-fire. To Lindbergh, referring to the latter's use of the aeronautical *We*, he said: "You have given to the world a flying pronoun." And to Admiral Byrd, when, after his antarctic trip, he came to the Hall for his third welcome: "Dick, this has got to stop. It's getting to be a habit!" He was equally informal in his remarks to foreign guests, especially those who, he knew, couldn't understand a word he said. To Marshal Foch, after struggling in vain to pin a medal on the soldier's tough army coat, he said with a smile, the friendliness of which his guest could not fail to understand: "Marshal, you have been reading the newspapers and have been misinformed. You didn't need to wear a bulletproof coat to this reception." Even when the Mayor strove for dignity, the crowd wouldn't let him "get away with it." He had no sooner bundled Queen Marie of Rumania into the waiting motor and popped nimbly in beside her than a standee yelled:

"Hey, Jimmie, dated her up yet?"

Good old Jimmie! Good old General Motors! Good old Radio! Good old Professor Fisher of Yale, who announced that stocks had reached a permanent high level and would stay there for many years! Good old Charlie Mitchell! Good old Montgomery Ward! Good old Andy! Good old Cal! Good old National Bellas Hess! *C'est la boom!*

And there you have the story, from the day of Henry Hudson's dubitable discovery to the eve of Jimmie Walker's indubitable departure, of "the place where we all got drunk."

Followed panic, depression, and war. The years when men's thoughts ran downhill. The years when almost everything on Manhattan Toe, except the skyscrapers, crumbled or fell.

It is not yet time to write about these years. Not yet possible, with anything like objectivity. The past is too recent, the present too chaotic, the future too clouded.

So let us stay within the spirit of the Toe. Let us lift a *hackhack* to *Manahachtanienk*. Let us drink to the Golden Mile which lies between the Battery and the Fields.

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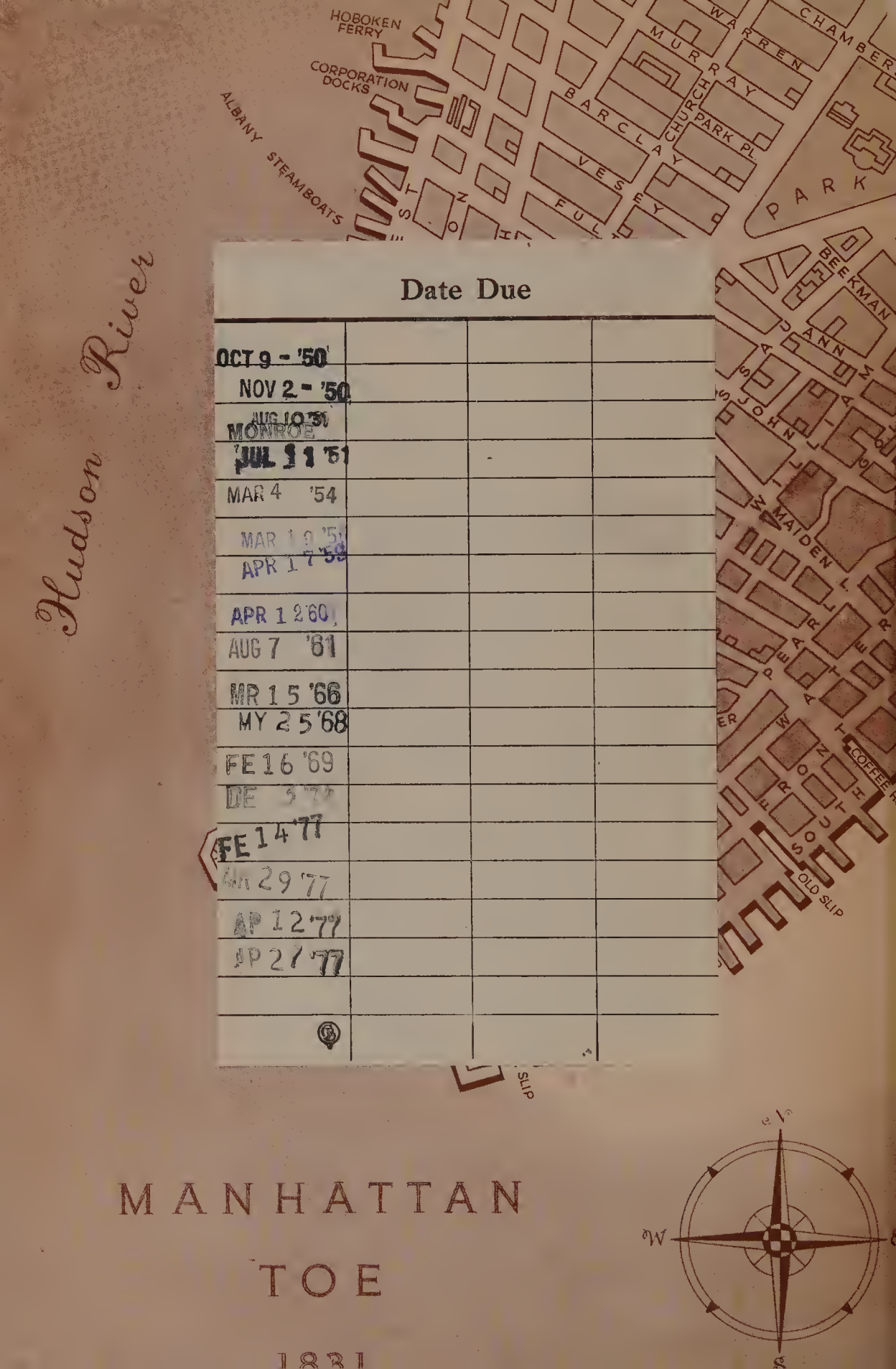

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